Theories of the Israelite occupation of the Land of Canaan

by

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my family. Their support and encouragement has been pivotal in everything I have ever been able to do. More importantly, they have supported every new turn that I have chosen both professionally and academically. To my wife, Maridee, and my children, Chandra and Dreux, thank you for putting up with the long nights, the piles of books, and the messy office.

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Abstract

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This work investigates the Israelite occupation of the Land of Canaan as reflected in the biblical tradition in order to conclude how the Israelites came to occupy the Promised Land. In order to arrive at that end, this work reviews the current theories of occupation, analyzes the biblical books of Joshua and Judges, reviews the current archaeological evidence and investigates the roles of the terrain and military tactics in order to arrive at a conclusion.

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Introduction

The process of the Israelite settlement in the land of Canaan has intrigued historians, politicians and laymen alike for centuries. At times, this issue has taken on political undertones supporting or defending the agendas of people on both sides of hotly contested issues such as Zionism or the current Palestinian issue. Those issues will not be addressed in the context of this text. Instead, this work will confine itself to an analysis of the two pertinent Old Testament books, Joshua and Judges, and current information that either supports or opposes those two books. The simple objective is to independently reevaluate the settlement process and conclude how the settlement actually occurred.

Previous evaluations of the available data have led scholars to opposing theories of how, or even if, the Israelites came to settle in the Land of Canaan. Generally speaking, those theories have evolved to form the three current schools of thought on the subject. Each of those three schools is named after the central theme of its occupation theory: conquest, infiltration, and revolution. Each of these three opposing theories seems to rely heavily on their own specialty field, and therefore the predisposition of the members of that school. Individual scholars that specialize as sociologists, historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, text critics, and others, attempt to evaluate the available data emphasizing the data from their particular field of study while de-emphasizing conflicting data from other fields. Clearly a fresh, holistic approach is required.

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This author is a layman on the subject and has no particular specialty in archaeology, biblical history, anthropology or sociology. The only "expertise" offered herein is restricted to a logical evaluation of the available data and many years of tactical military experience. After all, by most accounts the Israelite occupation of the Land of Canaan was, at least at some level, a military operation. The evaluation of the books of Joshua and Judges, the extra-biblical sources, and current the archaeological information, all requires the scrutiny of a military eye in order to arrive at a conclusion based on all the data. Items of particular interest include the terrain where the events are said to have occurred, the applicable road networks associated with those events, and the search for militarily logical sequences in the text that might tend to strategically explain the biblical traditions.

The two books of the Bible that relate to the Israelite occupation of the land of Canaan are the books of Joshua and Judges. Although there are applicable references to the occupation and its associated battles contained in other books of the Bible, this work will largely confine itself to Joshua and Judges. Additionally, there is no direct extra-Biblical reference to the Israelite occupation of the Land of Canaan. The Bible is the main source of information for comparison against other available evidence. Therefore, this work will restrict its span to those two books, the applicable terrain, and the archaeological record.

Before investigating the biblical texts and the current applicable data, it is imperative to understand the leading theories associated with the Israelite occupation of the Land of Canaan. The search starts there.

Chapter 1 – A discussion of the problem –

a)   **Introduction of the Apiru and the Habiru –**

Because some of the occupation theories rely, or at least refer to the Habiru, it is important to review the evidence of their existence. The terms Apiru and Habiru are translated from their phonetic syllables to mean "Hebrew". Through the extra biblical use of the term the prepositioning of a group know as "Hebrews" in the region is well established. We have of variant forms of the term Habiru from the ancient Babylonian Empire, the Mari texts, the city of Nuzu in the land east of the Tigris, and from the Hittite Asia Minor as late as the fourteenth century BCE. Finally, the same core word appears in Egypt in the nineteenth and the twentieth century BCE.[1]

Likely the greatest wealth of pre-Iron Age, extra-biblical information was unearthed in the el-Amarna district of Egypt in the nineteenth century. The approximately 300 Amarna Letters provide general commentary on the social and political affairs of the region during the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries BCE.[2] These Akkadian clay tablets were written, primarily, to Pharaohs Amenophis III

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[1] Noth, Martin, The History of Israel, Second Edition, Pages 34-35 & 81, Harper & Row Publishers, New York and Evanston, 1960.
[2] Aharoni, Yohanan, *The Archaeology of the land of Israel*, Page 119, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1978.

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(1417-1379) and Amenophis VI (1379-1362). In the Amarna Letters the Apiru are referred to as outlaws cooperating with local "rebel" kings in Canaan.[3]

The term Habiru does not appear to indicate a population such as the "Israelites" but rather it is used as an indication of special legal and social status. On occasion, the term is used in this way in the books of law in the Old Testament (Exodus 21-2, and Deuteronomy 25-12) to indicate people of lesser legal status and meager means of self-support. Additionally, the term is used in association with people performing services as required. Noth concluded that "they did not belong or perhaps no longer belonged to the various strata of the old-established population but represented certain restless nomadic elements who had no roots in the soil."[4]

All of that said, the fact remains that there is no material connection between the Habiru of the Amarna Letters and the Israelite tribes. There is no mention in the Amarna Letters indicating that the Habiru came into Canaan from the desert or that they had even come recently.[5] In either event, historians have made much use of the Habiru and the Amarna letter that feature them.

b)   **The Israelite occupation of the land of Canaan: Theories.**

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[3] Hayes, John, and Miller, Maxwell, A History of Ancient Israel and Judah, Pages 65-66, 75, & 78, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1986.
[4] Noth, Martin, The History of Israel, Second Edition, Pages 34-35 & 81, Harper & Row Publishers, New York and Evanston, 1960.
[5] Hayes, John, and Miller, Maxwell, A History of Ancient Israel and Judah, Pages 65-66, 75, & 78, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1986.

People have been trying to identify biblically important sites and analyze the text for hundreds of years. Early attempt to identify specific sites in the Bible can be traced back to Asutorei Haparhi and Eusebius' *Onomasticon*. Among others, Clermont Ganneau[6] and Sir William Petrie conducted some of the first modern explorations in the Holy Land during the late 1800s. He was followed by more recent attempts at identification made by Robinson and Garstang.[7] As archaeology has advanced and additional extra-biblical information has become available, rough ideas were transformed into occupation theories. Some theories were quickly dispelled, as information became available, while others managed to gather a following.

The number of variant theories and the relative complexity of the entire issue are quickly evident. Scholars have proposed several theories that center on three basic concepts: the single conquest theory, the infiltration theory, and the peasant uprising theory. Although variations exist, these three theories appear to be representative of the core arguments of the other theories and so, for that reason, this work will largely restrict itself to those three basic theories.

i) The conquest theory

The conquest theory is generally associated with William F. Albright. In the conquest theory, the book of Joshua is accepted as the historical basis and the

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[6] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 377-8, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.

archaeological data are used to support the Joshua account of the occupation of the land. The conquest theory involves the massing of the twelve tribes of Israel and their invasion of the Land of Canaan. In this theory, Joshua and his forces attack the land killing all the Canaanite inhabitants and taking over the land.

Albright based his conclusions on the biblical account and the results of excavations that he conducted in the 1930's, 1940's, and 1950's. He attempted to correlate the archaeological evidence of destructions at key sites such as Hazor, Jericho, and Ai, with the biblical text, primarily the book of Joshua.

In Albright's view, the conquest occurred at the transition between the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age. Albright theorized that the advent of iron allowed the Israelites to survive in the arid regions of the eastern hill country because they were able to dig water cisterns and lined them with waterproof plaster. Today, information is not always interpreted, as Albright understood it. Not only are Early Iron Age cisterns rare but discoveries of iron tools in Early Israelite settlements are very rare. Both iron tools and cisterns did not become common until the period of the kings.[8] These key aspects of Albright's theory are obviously questionable.[9]

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[7] Dahlberg, Bruce, and O'connell, Kevin, Editors, *Tell El Hesi: the site and the expedition*, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake, Indiana, 1967.
[8] Zertal, A., and Noth, *Following the Pottery Trail – Israel Enter Canaan*, Pages 30-32, Biblical Archaeology Review, Vol. XVII, No. 5, Sep./Oct. 1991.
[9] Albright, John, A History of Israel, Pages 129-143, Third Edition, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1981.

In his book *Hazor*, Yadin infers his support for the conquest theory based on the evidence he uncovered during his excavations at that city. In particular Yadin cites the destroyed and robbed remains of the Canaanite City (stratum XIII) that he uncovered just below the layer of the semi-nomadic Israelite settlement (stratum XII) that followed. Yadin supports his dating for the destruction of Hazor, 1220 BC, with the appearance of Mycenaean IIIB pottery in the final Canaanite occupation layer.[10]

Based largely on evaluating the Biblical text, Aharoni advocates an Israelite conquest, but supports a two-pronged version of the theory that verges on an infiltration theory. In Aharoni's view, the conquest occurred with two mass waves of migration entering the Land of Canaan from two distinct directions: the south and the east. The first wave occurred around 1400 BC and originated from the south, in the area of Kedesh Barnea. That wave penetrated through the Negev into the highlands. The second wave is associated with the Israelite exodus from Egypt. That wave takes the path traditionally associated with the exodus and led to the penetration of Canaan from the Trans-Jordan in accord with the book of Joshua, but not under Joshua's leadership. Aharoni's version of the conquest theory has the tribes moving to, occupying, and securing their individual portions of the Promised

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[10] Yadin, Y., *Hazor*, Page 258-260, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, New York, 1975.

Land.[11] The clear implication of Aharoni's theory is his support for a conquest in line with the book of Judges and does not support a united conquest under Joshua.

John Bright's version of the conquest theory has an interesting twist. He begins his discussing of the issue appearing to support the infiltration theory but still concludes with the conquest theory. Bright supposed that during the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries BC a wave of future Israelites settled in Canaan in varying numbers. He sites extra biblical sources such as the Amarna Letters and their references to the Apiru or Habiru in order to show the presence of a Semitic segment of the Canaanite population. In Bright's theory, the Apiru lived on the fringes of society. Oppressed by their overlords, the dispersed Apiru populations were ignited into action when Joshua and his forces attacked into the Promised Land as related in the book of Joshua. The peasant population had no vested interest in the Canaanite society of the day because that society did not represent their needs. Joshua's attack west of the Jordan River ignited the Apiru peasant population and added to the available mass of Joshua's forces.[12]

Although the conquest theory is closer to the historical norm, and is clearly based on the biblical accounts as they appear in Joshua and Judges, there are critics of the theory. As will be discussed later in this text, the archaeological evidence currently available both supports and degrades the claims of this theory. The

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[11] Aharoni, Yohanan, *The Land of the Bible – A historical geography*, Pages 174-253, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1967.

evidence uncovered at key sites does not support destructions in accordance with the biblical text.

ii) The peaceful infiltration theory

The peaceful infiltration theory is associated with the German author Albrecht Alt.[13] The infiltration theory is based primarily on text criticism and statements in various parts of the Old Testament that refer to migratory peoples coming and going on a fairly routine basis. Alt read elements in the books of Chronicles, Samuel and Kings as supportive of the Judges narrative while interpreting the same elements as disproving the Joshua narrative.[14] This theory assumes that the tribes of Israel entered the Land of Canaan from the Trans-Jordan and from the region of Kedesh-Barnea to the south. In the theory, both populations migrated deeper and deeper into the land over a period of many years inter-mingling and eventually supplanting the Canaanite society. He viewed the battles portrayed in the books of Joshua and Judges as the final, or combat, phase of lengthy occupation.[15] Alt believed that the eventual creation of the Israelite State

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[12] Bright, John, *A History of Israel*, Third Edition, Page 129-133, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1981.

[13] Alt was German and published his findings in German. For that reason, we are forced to rely limited translated essays and quotations by other English language authors and their commentary on his work.

[14] Alt, Albrecht, with Wilson, R., Translator, *Essays on the Old Testament, History and Religion*, Page 208, Doubleday & Company, Garden City, New York, 1967.

[15] Alt, Albrecht, with Wilson, R., Translator, *Essays on the Old Testament, History and Religion*, Pages 218-20, Doubleday & Company, Garden City, New York, 1967.

was in reaction to the oppression of the Philistines, which seems to imply an element of social revolution.[16]

Alt's theory was based primarily on the biblical text and related to the hill country where no archaeological evidence was yet available[17] but later Yohanan Aharoni conducted pottery surveys of the upper Galilee in 1957 to test alt's theory. Aharoni found evidence that he concluded showed a long and peaceful settlement process that lasted for centuries, at least in that region.[18] Although Aharoni interpolated his findings to support his two-wave version of the conquest theory, the same raw data could also appear to support Alt's infiltration theory.

Martin Noth published his opinions on the matter in 1958. Noth's version of the infiltration theory begins with small, largely unassociated groups of semi-nomadic people that roamed into the unoccupied lands of Canaan and lived on the fringes of Canaanite society. Noth not only theorized that the Israelite tribes might not have existed prior to their establishment in the land, but he believed that the tribal names were actually regional place-names that became associated with the

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[16] Alt, Albrecht, with Wilson, R., Translator, *Essays on the Old Testament, History and Religion*, Pages 238, Doubleday & Company, Garden City, New York, 1967.

[17] Zertal, Adam, *Following the Pottery Trail – Israel Enter Canaan*, Pages 30-32, Biblical Archaeology Review, Vol. XVII, No. 5, Sep./Oct. 1991.

[18] Zertal, Adam, *Following the Pottery Trail – Israel Enter Canaan*, Page 30, Biblical Archaeology Review, Vol. XVII, No. 5, Sep./Oct. 1991.

semi-nomads that lived in that particular region (Refer to the following map, **Map A**[19]). Noth believed that each of the tribes came to occupy its place in the land by its own, unique path. In doing so each tribe developed its own historical tradition of occupation. Because the events in the book of Joshua occur it the region associated with the tribe of Benjamin, Noth postulates that the tribal traditions of Benjamin were later adopted and evolved to become the Israelite traditions related in the book of Joshua. Noth also believed that the few Canaanite cities that were destroyed during the period were likely not destroyed by the Israelites. He believed that those cities were destroyed by inter-city rivalries, by the Egyptians, or by the Philistines.[20]

Adam Zertal undertook a new approach to arrive at his conclusions.[21] He used a computer to compile 12 years of data that was amassed by a single survey team working in the territory of Manasseh.[22] The survey team searched every aspect of that region and reported the locations, types and amounts of pottery that they discovered at each location.

[19] Aharoni,Y., Avi-Yohah, M., Rainey, A., and Safrai, Z., *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*, Completely Revised Third Edition, Map 68, Page 58, Simon & Schuster Macmillian Company, New York.
[20] Noth, Martin, *The History of Israel*, Pages 68-84, Harper & Row Publishers, New York and Evanston, 1960.
[21] Zertal, Adam, *Following the pottery trail – Israel Enter Canaan*, Page 39-47, Biblical Archaeology Review, Vol. XVII, No. 5, Sep./Oct. 1991.
[22] Manasseh is one of the tribes of Israel and its territory is roughly the center third of a band running from the section of the Jordan River between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee, west to the seacoast.

Area of Israelite control
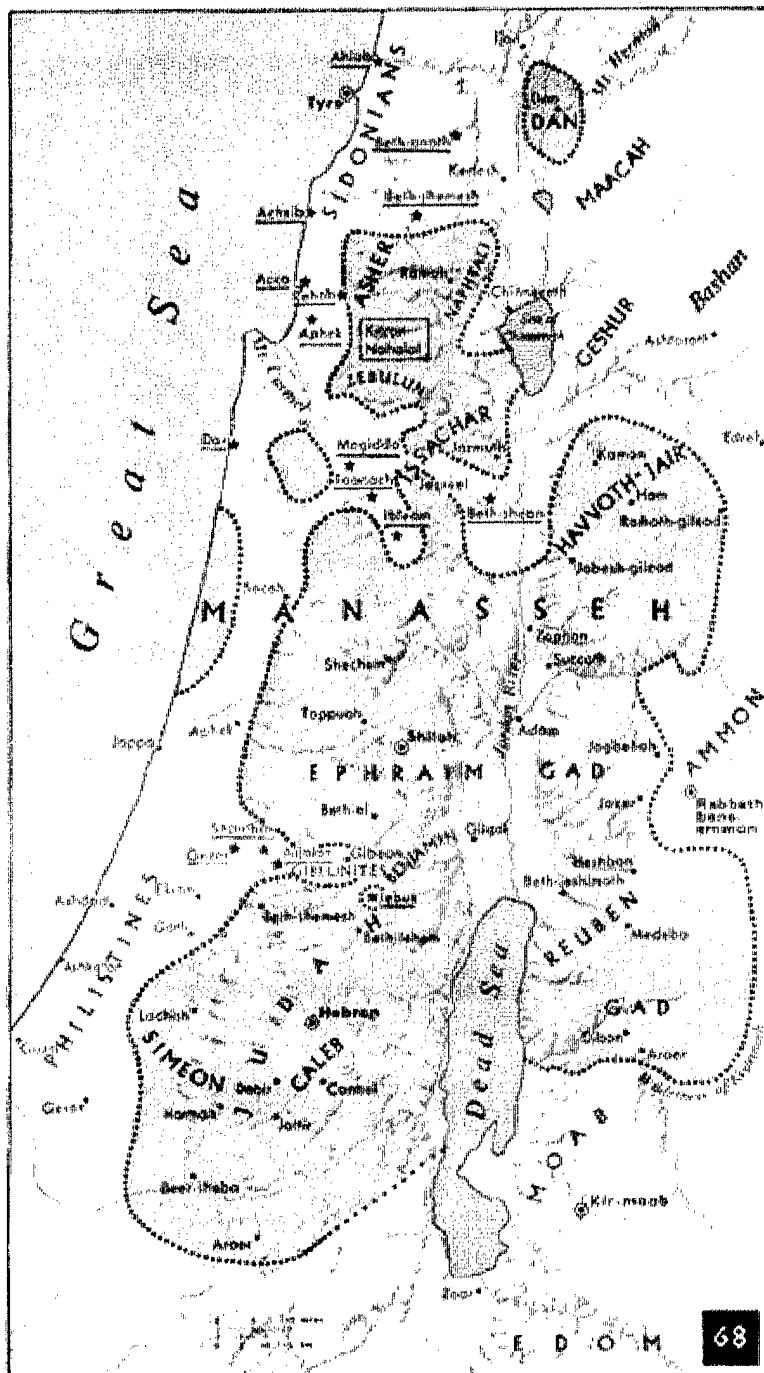
Gezer Canaanite city not conquered (according to Judg. 1)

JOSH 15:63; 16:10, 17: 11-18; JUDG. 1:21-35

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They further recorded several elements of information about the site itself, such as its elevation, soil composition, availability of water and relationship to known roads or other settlements. By establishing his database in this manner, Zertal was able to evaluate the information from different perspectives such as the locations and densities of certain types of pots as they change over time.

Analyzing the data, Zertal concluded that there was an extreme shift in the way land was used between the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age. He found that 43 percent of the Middle and Late Bronze period sites were concentrated in or near valleys, with their rich soil. However, only 19 percent of Iron I settlements were found in valleys. In contrast, only 13 percent of the Middle Bronze Age sites were in the hills while, during the Iron Age I period, a full 38 percent of the sites were found in the hills. Another striking contrast in the data revealed only 39 Late Bronze Age sites compared to 136 Iron Age I sites: a marked increase that corresponds to the biblical Israelite invasion. Furthermore and in contradiction of Albright's hypothesis that the advent and use of cisterns made life in the arid eastern Canaan possible, 90 percent of the Iron I sites did not have cisterns. However, the 30 percent of the jars discovered at the Iron I sites were the large storage containers now called *pithos*. After Iron I, the *pithos* almost disappears from use, as rock-hewn cisterns become common. Zertal theorized that the *pithos* was the water cistern of the early Israelite period that allowed the Israelites to survive in the arid environment of the eastern hill country.

The implications of the data is that something happened to prevent Iron I people from using the more fertile valleys and, instead, forced them to depend on the less desirable soil further up the hills and further from sources of water. Zertal concluded that the Canaanites had allowed the Israelites to use the valleys in the Late Bronze Age, but resisted that use in the Early Iron Age. Zertal interprets the Bible to implicitly agree with the picture painted by his data because the text does not record any conflicts between the Israelites and Canaanites in the Shechem and the northern hill country during the settlement period.[23]

Zertal summarized his research concluding that, beginning in the Late Bronze Age, the Israelites did cross the Jordan River and entered the Land of Canaan where the co-existed peacefully with the Canaanites. Then, in four main phases of expansion, the Israelites pushed further west into Canaan. Zertal added that the second, and largest push westward correlates with the accepted date of the Israelite invasion of Canaan. Additionally Zertal concluded through his survey that no such infiltration occurred in the south,[24] a fact that directly conflicts with Aharoni's version of the conquest theory because it reputes a southern occupation during the appropriate period.

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[23] Zertal states that most of the battles listed in the bible were fought in the north centered on the battle with Hazor and, the south, centered on the battle of Gibeon. Zertal views the story of Dinah (Genesis 34), the Battle of Bezeq (Judges 1), and the Joshua 12, 17, and 24 accounts of Tirzah, Tappuah and Hepher all as anachronistic.

[24] Zertal, Adam, *Using pottery forms and width stratigraphy to trace population movements*, A sub-article appearing in *Following the pottery trail – Israel Enter Canaan*, Page 39-47, Biblical Archaeology Review, Vol. XVII, No. 5, Sep./Oct. 1991.

An occupation theory that discounts the use of armed military conflict is problematic for two main reasons. As will be discussed in the following chapters a totally peaceful infiltration into the Land of Canaan appears to discount both the Joshua and the Judges accounts of those events. Additionally, the archaeological evidence of destructions uncovered at key Canaanite sites can not be easily attributed to other forces.

iii)   The Peasant uprising theory

George Mendenhall first proposed the peasant uprising in the mid-1960s. Norman Gottwald further developed Mendenhall's peasant uprising theory to arrive at his social revolution theory.[25] The peasant uprising version could be considered an extension of the infiltration theory because it requires the insertion of the Israelite tribes as a pre-condition. Here the tribes were present and disbursed throughout the land but positioned at the bottom of the social-economic ladder as peasants. Eventually the peasant population, both the Israelites and the Canaanites, were rebelled for unknown reasons and put off their oppressors, the ruling class. In this way the Hebrew society overcame the Canaanite society from within. The surviving Canaanites were simply assimilated into the Israelite society.[26]

In the second version of the peasant uprising, the social revolution theory, Gottwald theorized that the Canaanite peasant populations of the region rebelled in

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[25] Zertal, Adam, *Following the Pottery Trail – Israel Enter Canaan*, Page 30, Biblical Archaeology Review, Vol. XVII, No. 5, Sep./Oct. 1991.

an internal social revolution against their ruling class. Following their rebellion, the peasant Canaanites fled east and settled in the eastern hill country. Variants of the theory exist with and without the insertion of the Israelites but the core issues remains the same. The refugee Canaanite peasants evolved to become what we now know as the Israelites. Gottwald relies heavily on extra biblical references such as the Amarna Letters and their references to semi-nomadic troublemakers to support his case. In his theory, the semi-nomadic rebels and the Canaanite peasants evolve after the social revolt to become the Israelites that would eventually build the united Israeli kingdom.

There is one very key distinction between the social revolution or peasant uprising theories and the other occupation theories. The theories of both Mendenhall and Gottwald claim that most, if not all, of the early Israelites were really Canaanites who defected from the main Canaanite urban centers in the west and north sometime in the Late Bronze Age.[27]

Both the peasant uprising theory and social revolt theory are problematic from the viewpoint of basic logic. They both appear to be based on fundamentally flawed assumptions. If we are to accept these theories, we are expected to agree that the population of a city would rise in revolt against its overlords and burn their own cities. Furthermore, we are expected to agree that the cultural shifts associated

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[26] Zertal, Adam, *Following the Pottery Trail – Israel Enter Canaan*, Pages 30-32, Biblical Archaeology Review, Vol. XVII, No. 5, Sep./Oct. 1991.

with some city destructions were virtually spontaneous reactions and do not reflect a change in population.

b) Problem solving method.

The objective of this work is to add a new dimension to the study in order to determine the method by which the Israelites came to physically occupy the Land of Canaan. As noted above, the Israelite occupation of the Promised Land has been studied from just about every possible angle. This work will re-evaluate the current, and traditional, information available, and will focus on heretofore insufficiently studies aspects of the question, namely topography and military tactics, in order to arrive at a conclusion on the question. In order to do that, it is necessary to begin with the text itself: Joshua and Judges.

The first step in the investigation is the evaluation of the biblical text. The books of Joshua and Judges are the topics of entire books in and of themselves. It is not the intent of this work to dissect each and every passage of the biblical books, but rather to highlight key passages that seem to be tactically or militarily relevant to the subject in the opinion of this writer.

By way of an introduction, the textual evaluation begins with the holistic meaning of the texts from both the conventional and the historical viewpoints. In other words, how do the two books fit together in the biblical tradition? Then, what

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[27] Zertal, Adam, *Following the Pottery Trail – Israel Enter Canaan*, Page 30, Biblical Archaeology Review, Vol. XVII, No. 5, Sep./Oct. 1991.

does each of the two books have to say about the subject at hand? In the independent evaluations that follow, it is important to scrutinize each of the two books separately.

The subject of Chapter 2 is the conquest as portrayed in the narrative of the book of Joshua. The analysis of the book of Joshua focuses on a few key points: the general analysis, Joshua's use of spies, the list of conquered cities in chapter 12, and the sequencing of events in chapter 12. Clearly chapter 12 is a focal point herein because it appears as a summary of the conquests of Joshua leading his massed Israelite army through the land. Because of its summary presentation, it is an obvious focus for points of comparison. Particular attention is paid throughout the chapter to military logic and basic tactically sound strategy.

Chapter 3 evaluates relevant portions of the book of Judges. This discussion of Judge Chapters one and two will focus on the battle stories contained in the narrative. The information provided in Judges will be used in comparison with the Joshua narrative.

Chapter 4 is titled Joshua Vs Judges. Following the study of the conquest narratives in both books, a comparative analysis of the two is undertaken. Among the possibilities that will be proposed is a theory that the two books (Joshua and Judges) are simply two versions of the same event, and that each version (Joshua and Judges) of the Israelite occupation were simply written to meet the needs of different audiences. In order to explore that possibility, this work will explore

examples of other "duel use" stories such as King David's arrival at the court of Saul.

In particular, this chapter focuses in on key differences discovered in the two narratives that document the occupation. It is those differences that provide us with key points of information to later compare against archaeological data and other information in order to support one version of the occupation over competitor versions. Consequently, this comparison of the details included in the narratives yields key information that proves critical in the final conclusion. Again, military logic and its associated tactics are paramount throughout the entire chapter.

Chapter 5 is titled the "identification of sites." Because portions of this work rely on terrain, the location, and the relative positioning of one site in comparison to other sites, it is important to establish the validity of the basic data. That data is the foundation for all the analysis that follows. This chapter lists the thirty-one cities listed in Joshua chapter 12. Each site in the list is then discussed in varying detail, depending on the information available. The stated objective of this chapter is to relate the site's identification and how that identification was concluded. All available theories, locations, names, and alternate spellings are also listed. In the event of disputes, a conclusion is reached (by the author) based on the information available in order to determine a single data point for further analysis.

Chapter 6 again relies on the Joshua's list of thirty-one conquered cities in order to maintain consistency in organization throughout the work. This chapter is

focused on the applicable information available on the site to include pertinent biblical and extra-biblical references, and archaeological evidence associated with the site. Of particular interest is the presence, or lack of a destruction layer, method of destruction and any associated cultural shifts.

The information available for each of the sites is frequently conflicting. Furthermore scholars often evaluate information differently. In order to obtain a single data point for each site, the author will conclude key points such as destruction dates, occupations, or even cultural shifts. Furthermore we will conclude if that site's information supports one theory over the others, or the Joshua narrative over the Judges narrative. Those conclusions will be used later in the body of this work as the sole data points on that site.

The subject of Chapter 7 is a terrain analysis of the region. That analysis includes a look at the road network available at the end of the Late Bronze Age to both the occupants of the land and to the encroaching Israelites. Just as important as the road networks is the topography. This chapter begins with a general evaluation of the terrain but also includes an analysis of the terrain and roads from a military perspective. Key assumptions that could bear on the issue are also included.

Chapter 8 is reserved to summarize the conclusions reached during the course of this work and is restricted to key points that support the overall conclusion reached herein. The final section of Chapter 8 is the conclusion. In the

body of the conclusion, I propose my version of the how the Israelites came to

occupy the land of Canaan.

Chapter 2 - The book of Joshua

a) General analysis

A superficial reading of the book of Joshua leaves the reader with the sense of a massive and divinely aided Israelite army advancing into their Promised Land. In the text, Joshua was selected as the leader of the nation following the death of Moses. Joshua is given instructions from God on how, where, and when to conduct his preparations and eventually his military operations. Because the book of Joshua is written as though all the battles were under his united command, the analysis of the book assumes a united army under his command.

The book of Joshua is loosely divided into three sections. The first section, Joshua chapters 1 through 11, provides details to various battles during the conquest. The second section, Joshua chapter 12, provides a summary of the conquests of Joshua. The final section starts with Joshua chapter 13 and continues through the remainder of the book, concluding with the death of Joshua. This third section relates the division of the Promised Land among the tribes of Israel and Joshua's leadership over the new lands. It is important to note the inference that the land was divided between the tribes after the major battles of conquest. That distinction is a key feature in the book in the narrative of Joshua.

b) Joshua's use of spies – the invasion begins

The first site that is involved in the Israelite invasion of the Land of Canaan, as listed in the book of Joshua, is the city of Jericho. In Joshua chapter 2: 1-24,

Joshua sends out spies from the Israelite base near Sihon to reconnoiter the city; a tactically logical first step to any attack, and clearly a step with a historical biblical precedent.

In Numbers 13: 1-33, after the Israelite flight from Egypt, Moses sent spies into the Promised Land to gain information that he would need in order to attack. Moses gathers a representative from each of the twelve tribes and tasks them with the mission of reconnaissance. In his instructions to the group of spies, Moses details the information required from his spies. Moses wanted to know routes of passage through the land leading to the hill country. He wanted to know the strengths, relative numbers, and fortifications of the occupants of the land. Moses also displayed his concern with the terrain because he wanted to know about the fertility of the land, its ruggedness, and its woodlands. He even tasked the spies with bringing back samples of the fruit of the land that were ripe at the time. He encouraged them "to be bold in their actions", and thorough in their movements through the region. Moses' instructions to his men rival those of modern tacticians. He clearly related to his men their task, their purpose and his intent for their mission. Although that attack into the Promised Land that followed failed, Moses' seemingly modern use of spies in combat is none the less impressive.

In the Bible, Moses' people are disheartened by the negative report of the spies and loose their faith. After admonishment by God, many of their number decide to invade the Promised Land in spite of God's direction to the contrary.

Moses, and others obedient to God's command, refuses to participate in the invasion from the south. In the text, the failure of their attack is accredited to the lack of faith of the people and their disobedience of God, but could there be other strategic reasons for the failure of the attack?

Adam Zertal[28] credits the failure of this first attempt at taking the Promised Land with the a few simple factors: division of the force, a lack of leadership and a lack of inspiration. First, many of the Israelite warriors were obedient and did not go into the land, thereby dividing the force and weakening the attack. In modern military terms this would be a violation of unity of effort. Second, Moses and other influential men did not go, thereby depriving the attacking force of leadership. In modern terms, this would be a violation of unity of command. The third reason is more psychological. The attackers had neither their leadership, nor the Ark of the Covenant with them; therefore, they were psychologically weakened during their attack.

After the fall of Jerico, Joshua again relies on spies as he prepared for his first attack on Ai. Starting with Joshua Chapter 7: 2, Joshua orders his spies out to gain information as a first step in the preparation for battle. In this instance the spies returned with an overly optimistic assessment of their intended target: Ai. The text credits the failure of Joshua's army to take Ai on their first attempt with

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[28] Zertal, Adam, *Following the Pottery Trail – Israel Enter Canaan*, Pages 30-35, Biblical Archaeology Review, Vol. XVII, No. 5, Sep./Oct. 1991.

the sins committed during the taking of Jerico. Zertal's article credits the failure at Ai with a breakdown in the purpose of spies. The text shows that the spies, instead or returning from their mission with hard data from which the commander, Joshua, could make tactical decisions, instead they provided him with vague, intangible information and advice on how to conduct the attack. In either case, Joshua's second attempt on the city of Ai was wholehearted, and totally successful.

Although not many details are listed in the texts, spies were also in use during the battle for Bethel. Judges 1: 22-26 recounts how a spy discovered a route into the city. That information allowed the Israelite force to sneak into the city and led directly to the city's fall at the hands of the house of Joseph. The fact that the spies were shown the route into the city by one of the city's residents further implies support for the social revolution theory.

In the Joshua account of the taking of Jerico (Joshua 2: 1-24) the spies befriended the prostitute Rahab who aided them in their mission and provided them with protection. Zertal proposes that Rahab was the perfect insider for spies to befriend because, as a prostitute, she would have known the town and its men well. Additionally Zertal asserts that, because she lived along the city's walls, the ribbon used to mark her house might have served to mark a friendly path into the city's defenses for an unrecorded column of Israelite soldiers; possible explaining the miraculous tumbling of the city's walls. Because Rahab was a prostitute, she was clearly on the lower end of the social spectrum of Jerico. Zertal asserts that,

because of Rahab's social status, she would have been more willing to help outsiders. Although Zertal never states his support for any of the occupation theories, his theories do indicate his support for the social uprising theory.

The use of spies by Joshua demonstrates the organized and tactically sound manner in which the Israelite force proceeded in their mission. The historic examples help to show that the spy stories are not later additions intended to embellish actual events because they appear to have been in common use as first recorded in the narrative of Moses. Additionally the failure stories associated with Moses and the city of Ai are not logically fabrications because why would you fabricate a conquest story that begins with significant failures?

c)   **Joshua chapter 12**

The most important portion of the book of Joshua is chapter 12 because it provides the reader with a listing of the cities and the kings that Joshua and his army destroyed. In Joshua chapter 12, the 31 kings and their cities are listed by name. That list represents the greatest potential for analysis for two main reasons. First, they appear to be the larger, more important cities, so most of them have been located and identified. Second, the text refers to each of the cities as being utterly destroyed or only "put to the sword" so excavations of those sites would, potentially, reveal both a destruction layer and a culture shift in the population during the time of the conquest.

The cities listed in the chapter (Josh. 12:9-24) in sequence are:

Jerico	Walls destroyed and city burned (Josh. 6: 24)
Ai beside Bethel	City set on fire (Josh. 8: 19 & 28)
Jerusalem	People put to the sword (Josh. 10)
Hebron	People put to the sword (Josh. 10-37)
Jarmuth	People put to the sword (Josh. 10)
Lachish	People put to the sword (Josh. 10)
Eglon	People put to the sword (Josh. 10-34)
Gezer	People put to the sword (Josh. 10-33)
Debir	People put to the sword (Josh. 10-39)
Geder	People put to the sword (Josh. 10)
Hormah	People put to the sword (Josh. 10)
Arad	People put to the sword (Josh. 10)
Libnah	People put to the sword (Josh. 10-32)
Adullam	Destruction not specified (Josh. 12:15)
Makkedah	Destruction not specified (Josh. 10:28)
Bethel	Destruction not specified (Josh. 12:16)
Tappuah	Destruction not specified (Josh. 12:17)
Hepher	Destruction not specified (Josh. 12:17)
Aphek	Destruction not specified (Josh. 12:18)
La-Sharon	Destruction not specified (Josh. 12:18)
Madon	Not burned by Israelites (Josh. 11: 12)

Hazor	Burned (Josh. 11: 11)
Shimron-meron	Not burned by Israelites (Josh. 11: 12)
Achshaph	Not burned by Israelites (Josh. 11: 12)
Taanach	Not burned by Israelites (Josh. 11: 12)
Megiddo	Destruction not specified (Josh. 12:21)
Kedesh	Destruction not specified (Josh. 12:22)
Jokneam	Destruction not specified (Josh. 12:22)
Dor	Destruction not specified (Josh. 12:23)
Gilgal	Destruction not specified (Josh. 12:23)
Tirzah	Destruction not specified (Josh. 12:24)

In the interest of completeness it is important to understand that there are different versions of Joshua chapter 12. The LXX has only twenty-nine cities. Bethel is missing and instead of "the king of Aphek, one; the king of La Sharon, one" (verse 18) the text reads "the king of Aphek of the Sharon". It is possible that Bethel was removed from Joshua chapter 12 in order to eliminate the conflict with Judges 1:22 where the house of Joseph is credited with the conquest of Bethel "after the death of Joshua". The combined term "the king of Aphek of the Sharon" is also readily explained. There are many fortifications named Aphek throughout the Land of Canaan. The term Aphek was usually used regionally with some other

descriptive term to identify which Aphek. In this example it would be the Aphek in the region of La Sharon near the current city of Carmel.[29]

d) The sequence of events in chapter 12

One of the first questions that logically appear in the analysis of Joshua chapter 12 is why is the list of thirty-one cities in the order it is in? Did the editors of the book of Joshua choose to list the kings, and the cities, chronologically or otherwise?[30] Therefore an investigation of the sequence of the sites listed in the book could reveal a logical chain of battles that occurred during the Israelite conquest of the Land of Canaan as credited to a united Israelite army under the command of Joshua.

Convention states that the text was passed from generation to generation in the oral tradition of the region for centuries before it was written down. To accurately memorize such a long list, a variety of mnemonics could have been used. Among the possibilities, the cities on the list could have been memorized in alphabetical order, according to geographic orientation, or even in the order that they were conquered. Although any investigation of the list that involves language is beyond the scope of this work, the late two possibilities are not.

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[29] Aharoni,Yohanan, *The Land of the Bible – A Historical Geography*, Page 209, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1967.
[30] Convention states that the text was passed from generation to generation in the oral tradition of the region for centuries before it was written down. Whether or not the text was written relatively concurrently with the conquest, or was passed down orally, is not actually germane to this analysis.

To use the geographic orientation of the cities as a mnemonic the sites would appear to be listed from north to south, east to west, and so on. That is clearly not the case with the list in Judges chapter 12 (Refer to the following map, **Map B**[31]).

Applying an analysis of sequencing to the list of the 31 cities certain trends do begin to appear. Although two of the city sites have yet to be located, the remaining twenty nine have been at least tentatively located and, assuming the missing cities are contiguous, the identified cities can be analyzed for trends in sequencing without the two missing sites.

General analyses of the campaigns of Joshua can be broken down into three campaigns: central, southern, and northern. Convention states that the force inserted north of the Dead Sea and secured a foothold in the center of the land after which they moved to the southern third of the Promised Land. Following their battles in the south, the Israelite army fought four battles in the central region enroute to the north. In the north, the army fought another successful campaign before returning to the area of their initial penetration, Gilgal, in the center of their new lands.

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[31] Aharoni,Y., Avi-Yohah, M., Rainey, A., and Safrai, Z., *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*, Completely Revised Third Edition, Map 63, Page 55, Sinom & Schuster Macmillian Company, New York.

THE LIST OF KINGS OF CANAAN
12TH CENTURY B.C.
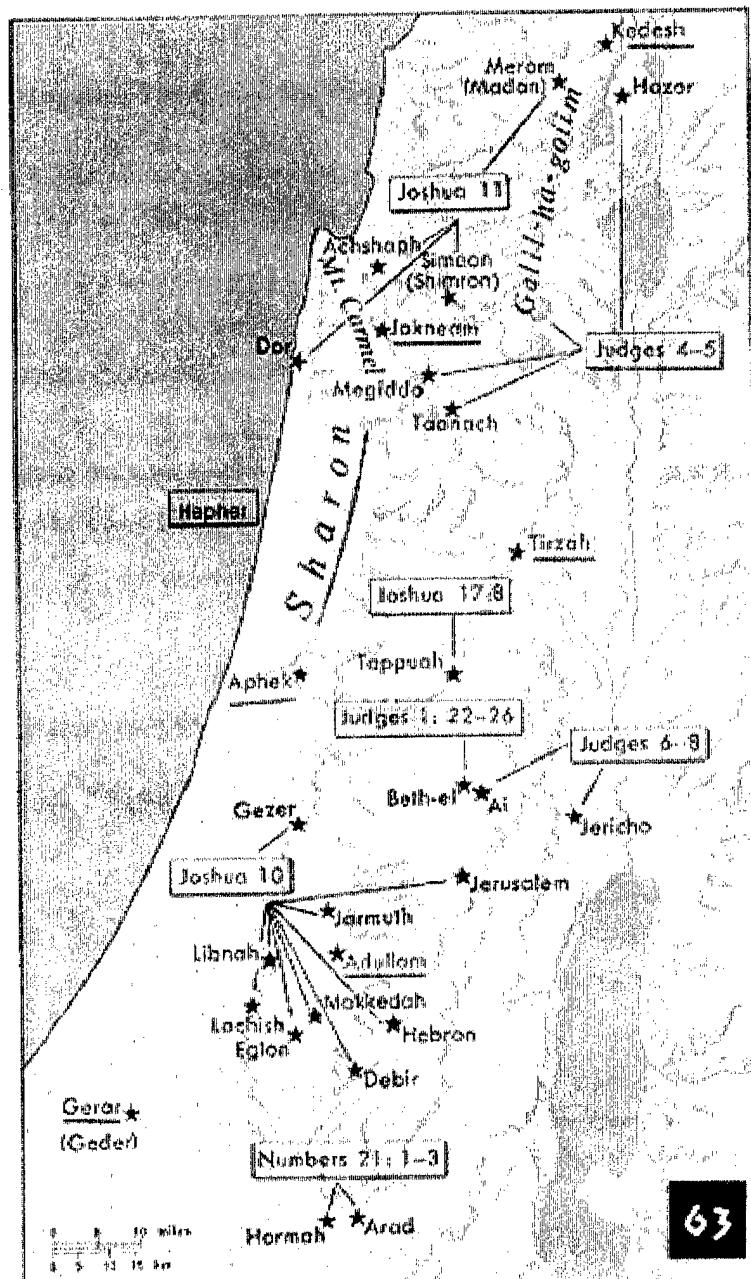
JOSH. 12:7-24

Kedesh   City or district not mentioned
          in account of conquest

However after closer examination, (Refer to the following map, **Map C**[32]) there does not appear to be logical order to the progression of Joshua's campaigns at all. In multiple instances the force bypasses cities only to return to them later. Take as an example the sequence of the first three cities listed in Joshua chapter 12: Jerico, Ai, and Jerusalem. Following his attack on Ai, Joshua apparently chose to bypass Bethel even though it was very near Ai, but later returned to capture Bethel as the sixteenth city on the list.

In the southern campaign the sequence listed is Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, Eglon, Gezer, Debir, Geder, Hormah, Arad, Libnah, Adullam, and Makkedah. The force moved from Hebron to Jarmuth bypassing Adullam enroute. From Jarmuth to Lachish they bypassed Libnah enroute. From Lachish and Eglon the force moved to the north to Gezer only to return to the southern city of Debir. The short sequence Debir, Hormah, and Arad sequence is logical, but after Arad the force returned to take the bypassed cities of Lachish, Adullam, and Makkedah. They then apparently returned to the center of the land and took the bypassed Bethel.

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[32]The basic map taken from Pritchard, James, editor, *The Times Atlas of the Bible*, Page 62, Times Books, London, 1994, with data added by the author.
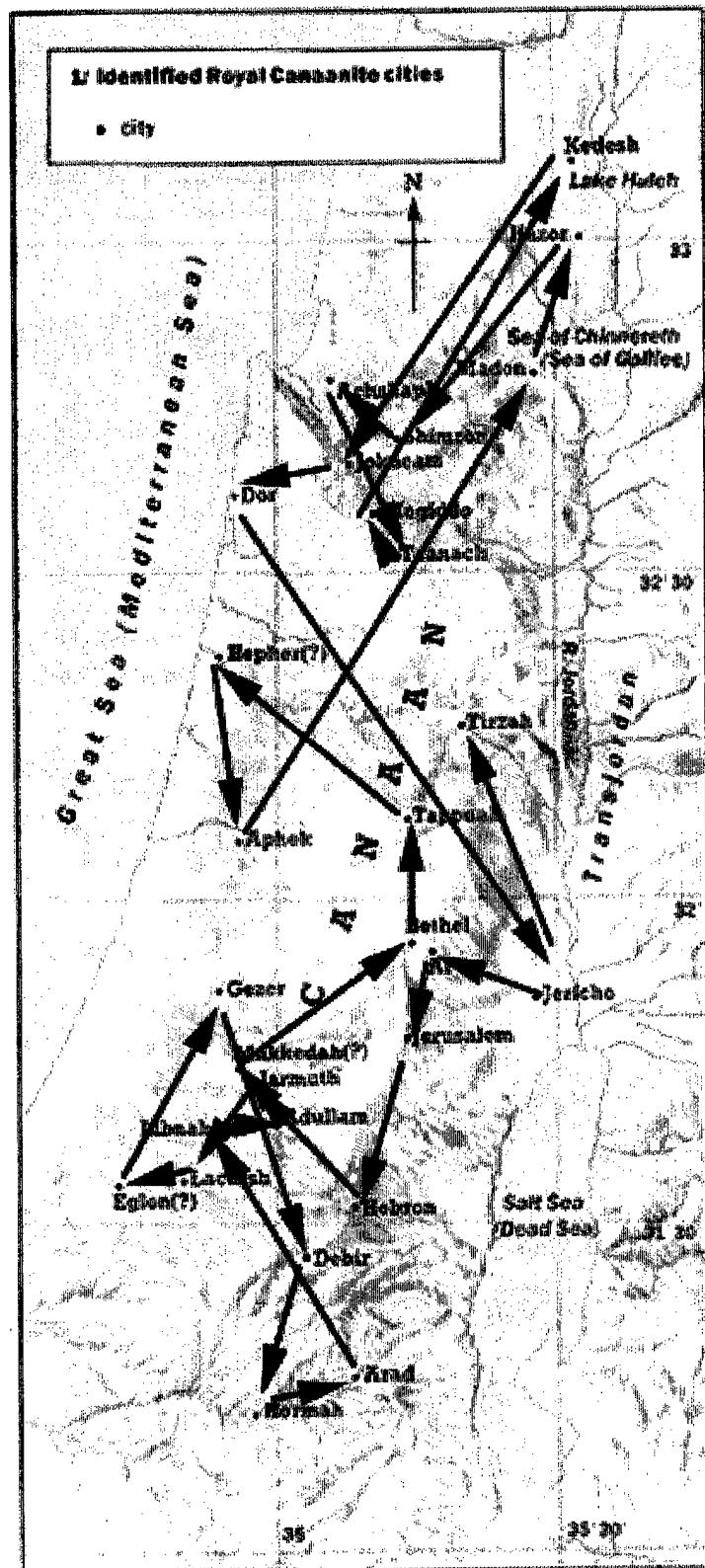
The route taken through the center sector, at least on the map, appears to be rather illogical too. The sequence listed in the chapter implies that Joshua and his men went from Bethel to Hepher in the northern part of the central section only to return south to Aphek. After taking Aphek, they resumed their route north to fight the northern campaign.

The northern campaign is even more full of inefficient routes and bypassed cities. From Aphek to Madon, Joshua bypassed Taanach. After Madon they continued north to Hazor only to return south to Shimron and Achshaph but from Achshaph to Taanach, Joshua appears to have chosen to bypass Megiddo. The decision to bypass Megiddo may appear tactically logical because Megiddo was a strongly defended city. If so, what would cause Joshua, immediately after the conquest of Taanach, to return to the bypassed Megiddo to capture it? At any rate, after the fall of Megiddo, Joshua moved his army to the northern city of Kedesh. Enroute back to the center of the land they conquered Jokneam and Dor before returning to Gilgal and finishing the listed conquests with the capture of Tirzah.

In light of these apparently illogical movements, can the sequence of list be explained or is chapter 12 simply a listing of conquered sites with no additional relevance? (Refer to the following map, **Map D**[33]) The sites surrounding the Battle

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[33] Aharoni,Y., Avi-Yohah, M., Rainey, A., and Safrai, Z., *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*, Completely Revised Third Edition, Map 56, Page 51, Simon & Schuster Macmillian Company, New York.

Sun, stand thou still at Gibeon, and thou Moon in the valley of Ajalon.
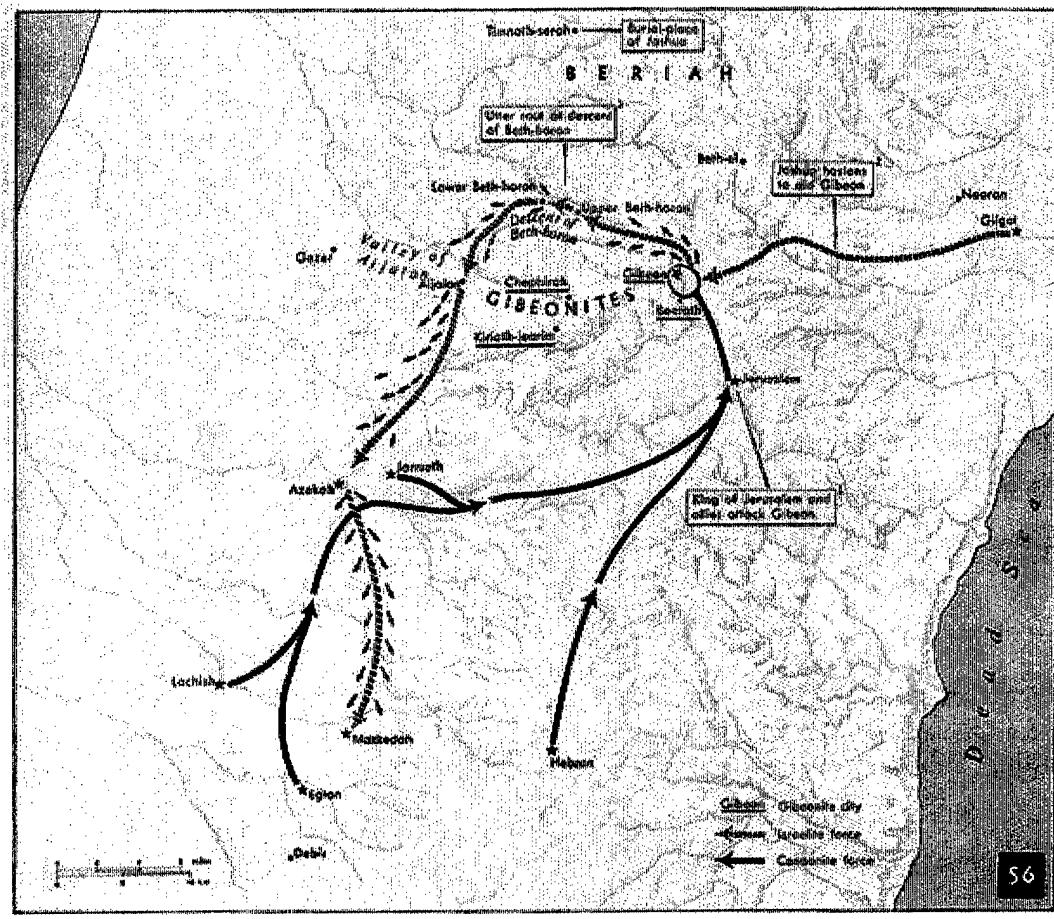
(Joshua 10:12)

JOSH 10:1-15

of Gibeon do fit the list sequence perfectly. The narrative in Joshua 10: 1-15 states

that the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon united to oppose

the invasion of the Israelites. Following the Israelite conquests of Jerico and Ai

they formed a treaty with the Gibeonites. It was that treaty, combined with the

news of the fall of Jerico and Ai that compelled the king of Jerusalem to unite the

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five cities and move to face Joshua's invading army of Israelites. In the battle that followed Joshua's army, together with his Gebeonite allies, utterly defeated the five united Amorite kings. Ignoring the other cities in the area and following the trace that a victorious Joshua would have followed in pursuit of the five defeated kings that had opposed him we find the appearance of a pattern. The sequence listed in the text is not only the easiest way to connect those cities but, considering the mountainous terrain, it is also appears to be the simplest route. (Refer to the following map, **Map E**[34])

The kingdoms of the five united kings not only comprise the third through the seventh cities listed in the twelfth chapter of Joshua, but the following nine cities listed are all located in the same southern region. It is tactically logical that Joshua would turn to face this serious united threat to his south and, after routing the enemy forces, he would pursue his disorganized enemy to finish them. It is also logical that, having defeated the forces of these major cities in battle away from their cities, that the cities would be largely undefended and easily captured. Note that the text refers to the destruction of the enemy forces and the death of their kings but does not specify that the cities we physically captured.

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[34] Aharoni,Y., Avi-Yohah, M., Rainey, A., and Safrai, Z., *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*, Completely Revised Third Edition, Map 63, Page 55, Simon & Schuster Macmillian Company, New York. Basic map taken from the cited source with additional data added by the author.

CONQUEST OF SOUTHERN SHEPHELAH DISTRICTS
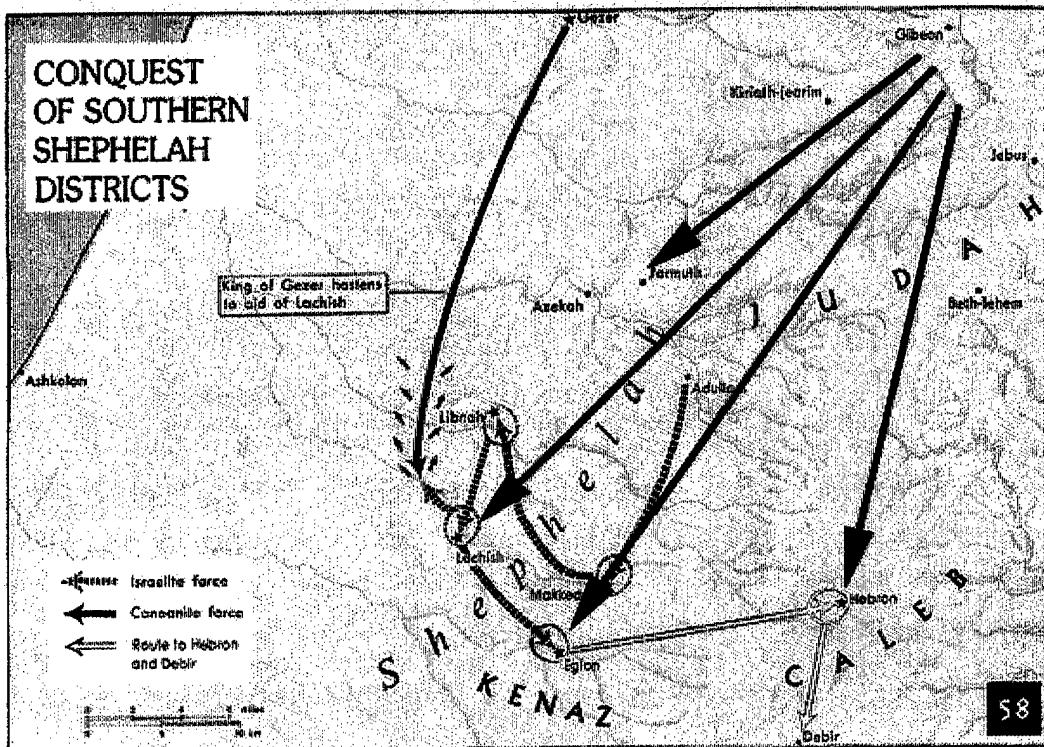
Although the sequence of the first sixteen cities on the list does not initially appear to make sense, it is clear from the text that, following the conquest of Jerico and Ai, and the Israelite treaty with Gibeon, Joshua was faced with an immediate threat that he turned to confront. Meeting with further success, he pursued the fleeing enemy and capitalized on his army's success. With that it mind, the text appears to be organized listing the five kingdoms that united against Joshua first and followed with a listing of the regional kingdoms that would have fallen as a result of the defeat of the first five.

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In the context of a southern campaign the city of Gezer stands out from the list because of its position in the center on the Promised Land and its position as number 8 on the list; just after the five united kings. Joshua 10:33 explains that the king of Gezer advanced in support of Lachish but by the time he arrived Joshua had destroyed the city. Joshua then turned his forces, defeated the Gezerites, and returned to finish the last of the five united cities, Eglon. Because of the chronological order of events Gezer could have been inserted before Eglon on the list, but just as logically, historians could have considered Gezer to be a battle that followed the conquest of the five. Therefore, the story surrounding Gezer's counter attack to aid its sister cities also fits logically into the list of thirty-one cities.

Analysis of the northern conquests is somewhat more difficult. Chapter 11 of the text relates that the king of Hazor, the most powerful king in the northern region[35], called the kings of the north to unite and form a combined army to face the Israelite threat to their south. In the narrative, Joshua moved to face them in the north and their forces met at the Waters of Merom. (Refer to **Map F**[36]) Joshua's forces achieved total surprise and effectively destroyed the combined northern force.

[35]Suggs, M., Sakenfeld, K., and Mueller, J., Editors, *The Oxford Study Bible*, Pg. 231, Oxford University Press, New York, 1989.
[36] Aharoni,Y., Avi-Yohah, M., Rainey, A., and Safrai, Z., *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*, Completely Revised Third Edition, Map 62, Page 54, Sinom & Schuster Macmillian Company, New York.

THE BATTLE OF THE WATERS OF MEROM

Israelite force
Canaanite force
Canaanite auxiliary force
Area of continuous Israelite settlement

JOSH. 11:1-15

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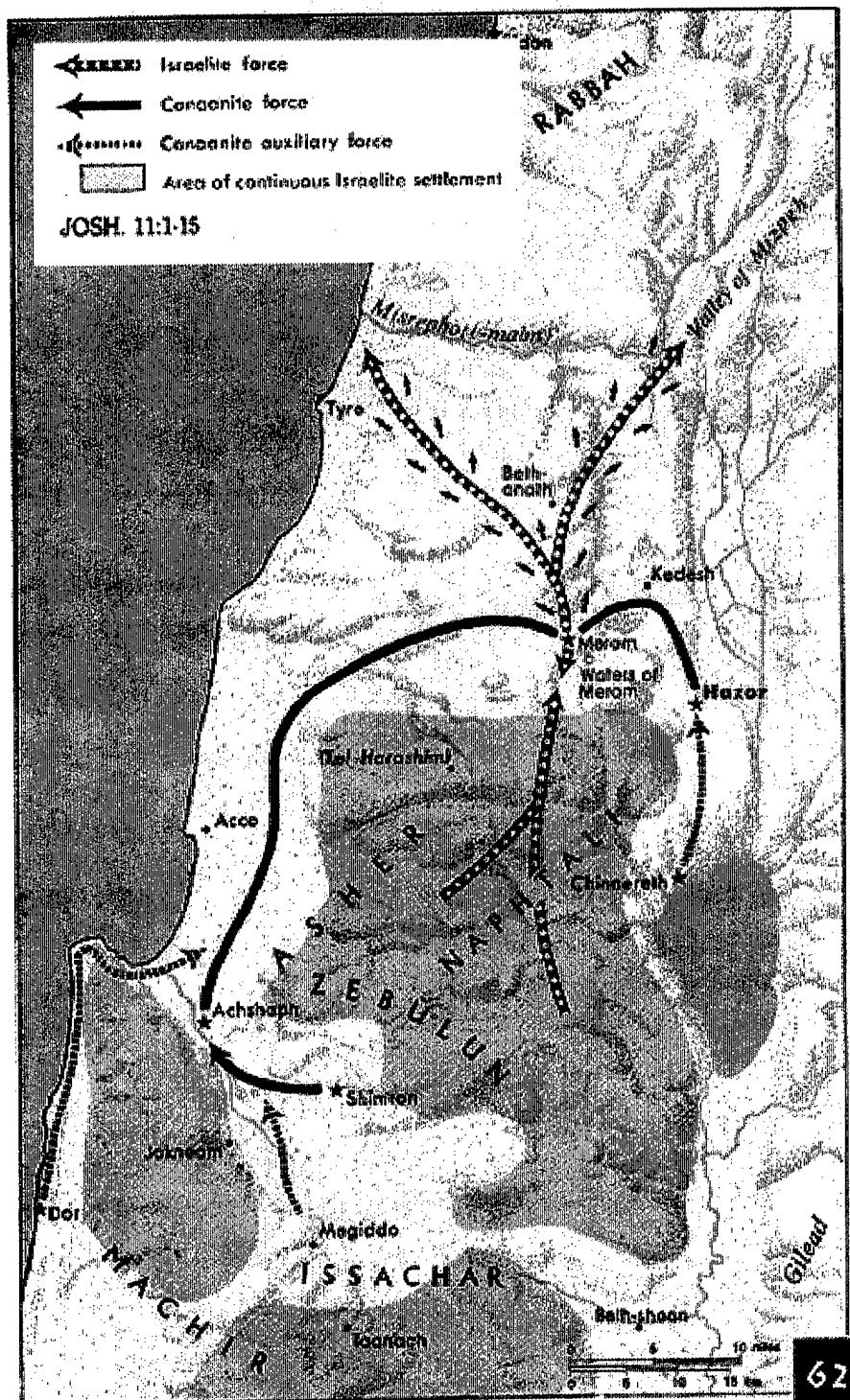
After the initial battle at the Waters of Merom, the text only refers of the Israelite force turning to Hazor and destroying it by setting the city on fire. "So Joshua captures these kings and their cities and put them to the sword, destroying them all" (Joshua 11:12). Verse 13 of the same chapter further specifies "The cities whose ruined mounds are still standing were not burnt by the Israelites: Hazor alone that Joshua Burnt."

Previously, the detailed information provided in the battle of Gibeon (pages 36-39) was useful in placing the first portion of the list in Joshua Chapter 12 into context and, therefore, explaining the sequence of the list in chapter 12 provided by the editors of the book. Unfortunately, no similarly useful information was provided to explain the list as it applies in the north. Joshua's route from city to city during the northern campaign, as it appears in Joshua Chapter 12, is highly illogical at best.

In theory, the battle at the Waters of Merom would have broken the back of the northern Canaanite forces just as the battle on Gibeon broke Canaanite power in the southern region. If the battle of Merom actually occurred, then Joshua should have been able to consolidate his gains by capitalizing on the weakness of the region. Unfortunately the list of thirty-one and the supporting biblical text offers no answer to the reader.

It is possible that the apparently illogical path taken by Joshua could be explained by variety of other yet unsupported factors. Although the possibilities

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are countless, Joshua could have intentionally bypassed certain populations because of unrecorded political treaties or even loose alliances that Joshua did not want to upset. It is also possible that those population centers were too well defended for the number of troops Joshua had at his disposal at the time but because of later Canaanite weaknesses, Joshua was able to capitalize on those weakness and in order to conquer those cities. A third possibility is that there are missing details associated with the battle at the Waters of Merom that would explain the northern sequence just as the sequence in the south can be successfully explained.

Only further research or the discovery of yet undiscovered libraries would answer the question of the sequence of the last third of Joshua chapter 12. Because the first two-thirds of the list of thirty-one does appear to be listed in a tactically logical and militarily efficient sequence it is logical to assume that the remaining third of the list is sequentially ordered too. For that reason, the list, as it appears in Joshua chapter 12, supports the unified conquest theory.

e)   **Joshua: chapters 1-11 and chapter 12 compared**

There is yet another question to be answered about sequencing. Does the order of the sites in Joshua chapter 12 follow the same sequence of Joshua chapters 1-11? The answer depends on what is considered relevant.

In general terms the earlier chapters of Joshua do accord exactly with the list of thirty-one cities in Joshua chapter 12. Joshua begins with the insertion of

the force and the capture of both Jericho and Ai. Next Joshua relates the southern campaign. The conquest portion of the book ends with the completion of the northern campaign. In those generalities, the list in chapter twelve and the detailed accounts that proceed it accord exactly.

As discussed in the preceding section, the list in Joshua chapter 12 begins with the insertion of the Israelite force into the Land of Canaan. While Joshua chapters one through five detail the preparations and entrance of the Israelites into the land, chapter six begins the combat as reflected in the list.

Chapters six and seven relate the details of the fall of Jericho and Ai respectively. Jericho and Ai are the first two cities on the list in chapter twelve. Chapter ten relates the events of the Battle of Gibeon. As discussed above, the cities in the Battle of Gibeon occupy positions three through sixteen.

Again, the events surrounding the northern campaign are difficult to support because of the lack of detail in the chapter eleven. The first city defeated according to Joshua (11:10) is Hazor, number twenty-one on the list. Tappuah, Hepher, Aphek, Al Sharon and Madon have been skipped without reason. No useful details follow in the remainder of the chapter.

Although there are holes in the information, the comparison of the list in chapter twelve with the details in the previous chapters do accord. The only conclusion that can be reached is that they do relate the same events or at least the

same traditions. The detailed narratives of Joshua 1-11 provide the details and the

list in Joshua chapter 12 provides a summary of the conquest narrative.

Chapter 3 - The book of Judges

Convention states that the book of Judges covers the period of Israelite history from the death of Joshua through the period when the tribes were ruled by a series of judges. The book ends with the beginning of the monarchy as related in the book of Kings. For the purpose of this study, we will focus on the chapters that are pertinent to the occupation of the land: chapters one and two. Conventional chronology of the two books is significant because, in some respects, the book of Judges appears to reaffirm the book of Joshua while in other respects it clearly contradicts Joshua.

One key difference between the Joshua and Judges narratives is that the book of Judges implies that the Promised Land was divided between the tribes when it was unconquered. Each tribe was then left to conquer its portion for itself; in contradiction to the book of Joshua. In Joshua the tribes were united and the military conquest occurred. After the conquest, the land was divided. Here, in Judges, the land was divided and the individual tribes were left to conquer their areas on their own.

Judges chapter 1: 4-21 relates the conquest of the south but this narrative differs from the Joshua narrative in that it fails to mention the participation or leadership of Joshua. The fact that the southern conquest is even included in Judges would seem to imply that the southern phase of the conquest of the Land of Canaan occurred after the death of Joshua, if Joshua ever existed at all. Although

interesting, these discrepancies are of little value to the question at hand. At best, this issue would only delineate two versions of the conquest theory.

The text does provide some very valuable information for comparison. In the Judges narrative, the editors have left us with two distinct lists of cities that are unique from the Joshua text. In Judges chapter one, the text lists the conquests of the tribes of Judah and Simeon. They are credited with the capture of the following cities:

Bezek	(Judges 1:5)
Jerusalem	Set on fire (Judges 1: 8)
	Coexisted (Judges 1: 21)
Hebron	Put to the sword (Judges 1:10)
Debir	Put to the sword (Judges 1:10)
Arad	(Judges 1:12-15)
Hormah	Destroyed (Judges 1: 17)
Gaza	(Judges 1:18)
Askelon	(Judges 1:18)
Ekron	(Judges 1:18)
Bethel	(Judges 1:22-26)

This list is problematic because it appears redundant. Both the Joshua chapter 12 narrative and the Judges narrative list Jerusalem, Hebron, Debir, Arad, Hormah and Bethel as cities captured in their relative campaigns. How could the same city have

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been captured twice? Is Joshua a fabrication and the Judges account factual or is Judges a fabrication and the Joshua account factual? Is it possible that these cities were captured twice or are both lists referring to the same campaign; simply reflecting different versions of the same battles?

Perhaps more significantly, the Judges narrative also lists cities that were not taken in that time. According to Judges the following cities were not conquered. The description "survived" and "co-existed" is taken directly from the text:

Bethshean	Survived (Judges 1: 27)
Taanach	Survived (Judges 1: 27)
Dor	Survived and co-existed (Judges 1: 27)
Ibleam	Survived (Judges 1: 27)
Megiddo	Survived and co-existed (Judges 1: 27)
Gezer	Survived and co-existed (Judges 1: 29)
Kitron	Co-existed (Judges 1: 30)
Nahalol	Co-existed (Judges 1: 30)
Accho	Survived (Judges 1: 31)
Zidon	Survived (Judges 1: 31)
Ahlab	Survived (Judges 1: 31)
Achzib	Survived (Judges 1: 31)
Helbah	Survived (Judges 1: 31)

Aphik	Survived (Judges 1: 31)
Rehob	Survived (Judges 1: 31)
Bethshemesh	Survived (Judges 1: 33)
Bethanath	Survived (Judges 1: 33)

Although the overall significance of those sites is yet undetermined, they do provide a point of contrast between the Joshua and Judges narratives that, when compared to archeological information, could be pivotal. The cities of particular interest will be the sites that are listed in the Joshua narrative as cities that were captured, but are listed in the Judges narrative as not captured. Those key cities are Taanach, Dor, Megiddo, Gezer, and Aphik.

Chapter 4 - Joshua Vs Judges: two versions of the same story?

a) General observations

The books of Joshua and Judges are conventionally viewed as sequential in the development of the monarchy. In other words Joshua conquered the Promised Land, divided that land to the tribes, and governed the tribes, transitioning into the period of the judges. The judges expanded the initial conquests of Joshua and governed the largely independent tribes. The implication of the text is that the tribes generally ruled themselves and only united to face special threats. The period of the judges ended with the rule of Saul who transitions the quasi-nation into the period of the kings starting with David.

As an alternate interpretation of the books of Joshua and Judges, the reader could consider the two books to be two different versions of the same event. This interpretation provides the reader with a choice; a strong and conquering hero figure in the person of Joshua, or a peaceful occupation under the wise leadership of the judges. This duel purpose use for a portion of text does have a biblical precedent, particularly with regard to the stories of how David came to the court of Saul (I Samuel 17).

b) David's path to the court of Saul: a Biblical example of duel use.

There is more than one example of this duel usage approach to the Old Testament narrative but the two variant stories concerning David's path to the court of Saul is the clearest example. The book of Samuel relates two distinct versions of

David's rise to power. In the first version, David was brought to the court of Saul as a young and talented musician to sooth the fits of a maddening king (I Samuel 14-23). In this version, David's innocence is portrayed in contrast with those of the corrupt king, Saul. The second version of David's arrival at the court of Saul is related in I Samuel chapter 17. In this story Israel was faced with the imposing Philistine army near the city of Gath. During the course of what amounted to a siege, the Israelite army was subjected to the daily taunts of the Philistine champion Goliath as he attempted to settle the issue through representative combat of champions (I Samuel 17: 24-25). The Israelites were frozen with fear and no Israelite warrior came forward to fight Goliath and defend the Israelite God. David was yet a boy and not considered old enough to join the men in battle but was sent to the front to bring supplies to his brothers. While at the front David heard the giant Goliath's taunts of Israel and was inspired to face him when all the men, and all their armor, feared Goliath. David chose to face, and defeat, Goliath with a simple sling and a stone. The metaphor of a simple and faithful underdog defeating the giant against the odds is clear.

c) Comparison: discrepancies between the two accounts

i) General discussion

According to the Joshua account, the conquest represented a unified effort of all the tribes of Israel working together in a bloody, swift and complete victory. After crossing the Jordan River Joshua led his army in three campaigns first

through the center of the land (chapters 7 – 9), then in the south (chapter 10), and concluding in the north (chapter 11). But the Bible also offers the Judges presentation of the occupation that portrays a long process accomplished by individual groups or tribes working independently, as individual clans. In this narrative the tribes only partially completed the conquest of the land.

In Joshua, the tribes are given their portion of the Promised Land near the end of the book and after the majority of the conquest. In Judges, the lands are divided in the beginning of the text. Here the independent tribes, in their various territories, accomplish the conquests. This disparity in the apportioning of the lands can be used to support the chronology of the two texts. In other words, the division of the lands can be viewed as a point in history that is common to both books and serves as a transition from the leadership of Joshua to the period of the judges.

Between the two texts, cities such as Hebron and Debir (Joshua 10- 36-39), that are reported as taken by Joshua are also listed in Judges 1: 9-15 as having been taken in actions by individual clans.

There is an additional biblical conflict over the status of the occupation of Jerusalem. In Joshua (chapters 10 and 12) the text tells us that the city was captured as part of Joshua's military operations in the south. However later the book (Joshua 15:63) echoes an almost identical statement in Judges (Judges 1: 21) stating that the children of Judah could not drive out the Jebusite inhabitants of

Jerusalem requiring their coexistence with them. In Judges, a young King David captured the city in order to place his new capitol there (2 Samuel 5: 6-10). If Joshua captured the city, then who did David take it from?

ii)   Hazor: Joshua or Deborah?

The battles associated with Hazor and their apparent conflicts do require attention. In the Joshua version of the conquest of Hazor, the conquering Israelite tribes under Joshua's leadership subjugated the city and killed its king, Jabin. The placement of the battle for Hazor in Joshua indicates that it occurred late in the conquest. However, in the book of Judges (chapter 4) there are two versions of the battle that appear to have occurred during that period of Israelite history.

The battle of Deborah and Barak against Sisera is remembered in the song of Deborah in Judges chapter 5. (Refer to the following map, **Map G**[37]) According to the poem, the battle took place on the Plain of Jezreel. Neither Hazor nor its king, Jabin, is mentioned. The problem comes from the preceding chapter 4.

Judges chapter 4 is a prose version of the same story and provides more details. Judges 4:1-2 reads "...and again the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, after Ehud died. And the Lord sold them into the hands of Jabin, king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor; the commander of his army was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth-ha-goiim." Verse 24 continues "...And the

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[37] Aharoni,Y., Avi-Yohah, M., Rainey, A., and Safrai, Z., *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*, Completely Revised Third Edition, Map 61, Page 54, Sinom & Schuster Macmillian Company, New York.

hand of the people of Israel bore harder and harder on Jabin, the king of Canaan, until they destroyed Jabin, king of Canaan."

The contradiction is clear: if Joshua destroyed Hazor and burned the city as the book of Joshua states, how can king Jabin remain, decades later, to fight Deborah during the period of the judges. The resolutions of these three versions of, perhaps, the same battle are as varied as the basic theories of the conquest itself.[38]

THE DEATH OF SISERA   JUDG. 4:17-22; 5:24-30
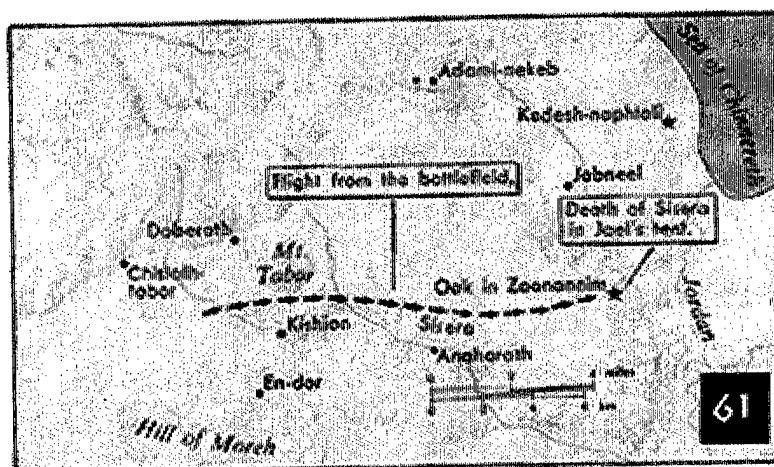
The first theory is a traditional approach and relies on the fact that, in Judges 4, Jabin is referred to in the past tense indicating that, when the battle

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The rationale Albright used to explain these discrepancies appear far more logical when based on both biblical tradition and the information at hand. Therefore, the concept of the Book of Joshua as the historic core and the Book of Judges as its sequel will be used herein.

occurred, Jabin was already dead. This theory assumes two battles: one under the command of Joshua and a later battle under Deborah.

The second theory represents a critical approach to the biblical texts. They deny the historical validity of the book of Joshua and the conquest associated with Joshua. They believe that the battles listed in Judges represent the final stage of the infiltration process.

A third opinion was purported by Albright. Albright and his school of thought take the book of Joshua as a "historical nucleus" for the Israelite conquest of Canaan. They stress that in the song of the battle of Deborah, neither Jabin nor Hazor are mentioned. They further stress that the battle occurred near Megiddo at a much later period, implying that the text is referring to different battles. Albright explains the later references to both Jabin and Hazor (Judges chapter 4) as editorial interpolation influenced by the Book of Joshua.

The final theory was authored by Mazar and supported by Yadin. Mazar speculates that both the books of Joshua and Judges do form a historic core but the events of the two books are reversed. In other words, the period of the Judges came before the period under Joshua. Reading the text in reverse order, Mazar's ideas do have some logic. Judges chapter 4 states that the hand of the people of Israel bore harder and harder on Jabin the king of Canaan, until they destroyed

him." Follow that with the finality of the Joshua narrative where Joshua kills the

king and torches the city in an intense fire.[39]

[39] Yadin, Y., *Hazor*, Pages 249-252, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, New York, 1975.

Chapter 5 - Identification of sites

Because this work depends so heavily on the site location to search for logical patterns within the context of the conquest it is important to pause and review what information was used to confirm the identity, and therefore the location, of each of the cities under discussion. More importantly, what evidence has archeology unearthed, if any, to confirm the location given?

Jerico – (Tell es-Sultan. Also spelled Jericho.) The city is identified by its long know location and the archeological record that has been uncovered at that site. No specific evidence is provided other than the physical confirmation of that which has long been known as the site.[40] Kathleen Kenyon identifies Jerico as Tell es-Sultan. The main mound in the vicinity of the oasis, Tell es-Sultan, is associated with the oldest of the Jerico settlements and is generally accepted as the Biblical Jerico of Joshua.[41] Tell es-Sultan will be used herein.

Ai – (et-Tell near Bethel) The name, Ai, translated from Arabic into "the ruin". The City is identified by its long known location and confirmed by the suitability of the surrounding terrain. In particular, the valleys associated with the

[40] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history,* Page 142-8, 386-8, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.

[41] Foerster, G., and Bacchi, Gabreilla, *Jericho - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land,* Vol. II, Page 550-575. Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

conquest of Ai in Joshua's double envelopment[42] of the Canaanites fits the terrain around Ai perfectly. Garstang excavated the site in 1928 and identified city walls that were contemporary in style to those of Jerusalem and Hazor.[43] Robinson suggested two sites in the vicinity of Beir Bibwan in 1838 as possible locations for biblical Ai. Et-Tell, with its imposing mound was the logical choice but because of its name, Robinson preferred Khirbet Haiyan at the southern edge of Dier Dibwan. In 1881, V. Guerin proposed another ruin, Khirbet Khudriya as the correct location. In 1924, W. Albright published a paper supporting the identification of Ai as Et-Tell based on his surface survey of the region east of Bethel because he believed that no other site could date to the period of the conquest. Albright's conclusion has not been seriously challenged and stands as the current convention.[44]

Jerusalem – The position of Jerusalem is determined by the continuous tradition of almost uninterrupted occupation of over 4000 years.[45] Although the founding date of the city is disputed, the city's location is not.[46]

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[42] A double envelopment is a tactical military term when an attacker surrounds his opponent on both flanks at the same time. As in this example, either a feint or fixing force is usually used to hold the enemy's center stationary during the maneuver on the flanks.

[43] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 354, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.

[44] Callaway, J.A., *Ai - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. I, Page 36-52, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[45] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 388-90, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.

[46] Yadin, Y., *Jerusalem - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. II, Page 579-622. Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

Hebron[47] – (Modern town of Khalil.[48]) The location of the city of Hebron is associated primarily with continual occupation and reference to the city as being Hebron. No other evidence is listed.[49]

Jarmuth[50] - (Tel Jarmuth: Yarmut in Hebrew and Kirbet Yarmouk in Arabic.) – There are two similarly named sites that contend for identification as the Jarmuth in question. Garstang only credits Jermucha as being the forerunner between the two sites. In either case the two sites are 4 miles apart and that short distance has little bearing on this analysis.[51] Abel, Albright, Garstang and others have accepted Tell Jarmuth as the site referred to in Joshua 12:11[52].

Lachish – (Tell ed-Duweir[53]) The position of Lachish is determined by continuous tradition and almost uninterrupted occupation from the time period in question to the present. The general site location and description in the text are confirmed in the city mound that exists at this location.[54] In 1878, C. R. Conder first proposed Tell el Hesi as the site for Lachish. In 1929, F. Albright questioned

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[47] Hebron is not listed as one of the cities or sites in *The Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations of the Holy Land*, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[48] Smith, William, Compiler, *Smith's Bible Dictionary – Complete Concordance*, Pages 126, Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, NA.

[49] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 383, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.

[50] Ben-Tor, A., *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations of the Holy Land*, Pages 544-545, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[51] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 171-2 & 386, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.

[52] Ben-Tor, A., *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations of the Holy Land*, Pages 544-545, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[53] Bright, John, *A History of Israel*, Pages 131, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1981.

Conder's identification proposing Tell ed-Duweir as the correct site basing his identification on Eusebius (120:20) who states that "Lachish was a village in the seventh mile from Eleutheropolis (Beth-Govrin) to the Negev (Doroma)" and on the size of the mound. Tell ed-Duweir is four times larger than Tell el Hesi. Since the excavations, Tell ed-Duweir is generally accepted as Lachish.[55]

Eglon – (Tell el Hesi[56] now called Ajlan[57] but also spelled Aijalon.) Along with its physical location and description the site of Eglon is associated with Tell el Hesi because of Albright's 1924 discovery of a tablet of the Amarna period from Zimrida (of Lachish) with which the city is associated.[58] Although Tell el Hesi is proposed as the location of other cities, it appears to be the consensus for the location of Eglon and will be used herein.

Gezer – (Tell Jezer or Tell El-Jazari) Tell Jezer was lost for a period but through its biblical description and maintenance of the Arabic name it was re-located in 1871 by M. Clermont Ganneau through his discovery of bilingual inscriptions referring to Gezer by name.[59] In 1873 he discovered the first of the

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[54] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 392, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.

[55] Ussishkin, D., *Lachish - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. III, Page 735-753. Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[56] Bright, John, *A History of Israel*, Pages 131, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1981.

[57] Smith, William, Compiler, *Smith's Bible Dictionary – Complete Concordance*, Pages 84, Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, NA.

[58] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 373-4, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.

[59] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 377-8, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.

now famous boundary markers in the vicinity of the mound that read "the boundary of Gezer" in Hebrew script from the Herodian period.[60]

Debir – (or Kirjath-sepher and known as Tell Beit Mirsim[61]) Identified largely by its location. Excavations have revealed that the site was occupied through the entire Bronze Age. Albright's excavation in 1929 discovered six scarabs dating from the period of the Hyksos that he used to confirm the site determination.[62]

Geder[63] - No information. The location of Geder is neither noted on any Garstang's maps, nor is its location discussed in the text.

Hormah – (Tell Masos or Khirbet El-Meshash) Although Garstang was unable to identify the site in other than general terms[64] Aharoni conducted a surface survey of the area of Tell Masos in 1964. During that survey he discovered a Middle Bronze Age II rampart and the remains of an Iron Age I settlement. Before that discovery, Tell Masos was believed to be from the Roman and Byzantine periods only. Excavations have revealed that the Middle Bronze Age community

[60] Dever, W. G., *Gezer - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. II, Page 428-443. Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[61] Bright, John, *A History of Israel*, Pages 131, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1981.

[62] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 210, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.

[63] Geder is not listed as one of the cities or sites in *The Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations of the Holy Land*, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[64] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 384, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.

was destroyed by fire and not rebuilt.[65] Although the information on Tell Masos remains limited, no evidence of Late Bronze Age occupation has yet been discovered. An Early Iron Age settlement was built on the site at the end of the thirteenth century BC. That new settlement was built in a different pattern from the earlier Bronze Age settlements, and was similar to other Israelite settlements in the region.[66] Currently Tell Masos is regarded as biblical Hormah and will be used herein.

Arad – (Tell Arad) The City is located south of Hebron and to the east-northeast of Beer-Sheba. In a survey conducted in 1928, the appearance of the mounds located at Tell Arad implied the existence of ancient fortifications but the age of the site was confirmed by the discovery of Bronze Age pottery on the mounds.[67] Arad is mentioned in the testimony of Eusebius who referred to a village by the name of Arad that he locates four miles from Molestha (Khirbet Kseifeh) and twenty miles from Hebron. The location described by Eusebius agrees with the location of Tel Arad. Aharoni conducted three excavations on the site from 1963 to 1965 and concluded that this was Biblical Arad. The site if

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[65] Kempinski, A., *Tell Masos (Khirbet El-Meshash) - The Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations of the Holy Land*, Pages 816-819, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.
[66] Kempinski, A., *Tell Masos (Khirbet El-Meshash) - The Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations of the Holy Land*, Pages 816-819, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.
[67] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 354, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.

further identified by the continued use of the name, Tel Arad, in Arabic to the present.[68]

Archaeological excavations at the proposed site have raised questions about its identification because no remains of the city have yet been found dating to the Late Bronze Age. Two theories have been proposed to address the issue, one by B. Mazar and one by Y. Aharoni.

Mazar's theory is that Canaanite Arad was not a city but rather the name of the region. This theory would account for the verbiage used in the Bible (Judges 1:16) "in the south of Arad". The text also states that the "king of Arad smote the children of Israel in Hormah". According to Mazar, this verse shows that Hormah was the seat of the king of the district of Arad. Mazar proposes Tel Malhatah (tell el-Milh) as the location of Hormah. Aharoni purposes that Tel Malhatah is the site of Arad and Hormah is to be identified with Tel Masos (Khirbet el Meshash).[69] Mazar's proposal of Tell Malhetah will be used herein.

Libnah – (Associated with the current village of El Menshieh.[70]) Dr. Bliss and Prof. Mcalester investigated the site in 1899. They concluded that the site it had been occupied since about 1600 BCE. They arrived at their conclusions by the discovery of both Egyptian scarabs and Mycenaean pottery during their

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[68] Aharoni, Y., *Arad - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. I, Page 74-89. Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.
[69] Aharoni, Y., *Arad - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. I, Page 81-89. Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

excavations.   Though they did excavate the city walls they determined that they were not built until the Early Iron Age.[71] Alternatively Tell Safi is proposed by some but the biblical description added to Esebius' accounts (120:25) imply that the site should be closer to Lachish. Tell Bruna is yet another unproven alternative, a claim blustered by the discovery of Late Bronze and Early Iron Age remains. All proposed sites remain unsubstantiated.

Adullam[72] - (Khirbet Esh-Seikh Madh-kur) The site is identified primarily by convention. The proposed tell does have Bronze Age debris throughout but that debris is not conclusive forcing the use of convention as our sole point of information.[73]   Eusebius (24:21 and 172:7) mentions Adullam as a large village near Beth Gubrin whereas the site of the later periods is identified with nearby Khirbet Id El-Ma.[74] The exact location remains unknown.[75]

[70] Smith, William, Compiler, *Smith's Bible Dictionary – Complete Concordance*, Pages 182, Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, NA.

[71] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 391-3, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.

[72] No other information is available, this city is not listed in *The Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations of the Holy Land*, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[73] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 356, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.

[74] Negev, Avraham, Editor, *The Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land, Revised Edition*, Page 15, Thomas Nelson Publishers, New York, 1986.

[75] Negev, Avraham, Editor, *The Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land, Revised Edition*, Page 122, Thomas Nelson Publishers, New York, 1986.

Makkedah – (El Klediah, in Wady es Sumt[76]) This location fits both the physical descriptions of the texts and associative position as referred to from other regional cities.[77] The physical stature of the site only correlates with Canaanite Makkedah.

Bethel – (Known as Luz at the time) The modern city of Beitin was first established as the location of biblical Bethel by E. Robinson in May, 1838 on the basis of geographical references in the Bible (Genesis 12:8, Judges 21:19 and others).[78] The site is described in Joshua as located west of Ai and south of Shiloh. The site is further described in *Onomasticon* of Eusebius as being located 12 miles from Jerusalem and on the right side of the road to Neopolis between Bethaben and Ai. The modern city of Beitin fits the physical location.[79]

Tappuah[80] – No archaeological information on the site is available.

Hepher[81] – Lost.[82] No other information on the site is available.

[76] Smith, William, Compiler, *Smith's Bible Dictionary – Complete Concordance*, Pages 190, Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, NA.

[77] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 394, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.

[78] Kelso, J. L., *Bethel - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. I, Page 190-193. Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[79] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 26 & 369, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.

[80] No other information is available, this city is not listed in *The Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations of the Holy Land*, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[81] No other information is available, this city is not listed in *The Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations of the Holy Land*, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[82] Smith, William, Compiler, *Smith's Bible Dictionary – Complete Concordance*, Pages 126, Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, NA.

Aphek – (Tel Rosh ha'Ayin. In Arabic: Tell Ras el'Ain and also called Fik.[83] Also spelled Aphik.) Unidentified by Garstang and listed simply as a fortification likely located in the plain of Acre. In 1923 Albright conducted a survey of the mound and collected Middle and Late Bronze Age pottery as well as Iron Age I Israelite pottery shards. They also collected newer Hellenistic and Roman pottery. In his opinion, these discoveries confirmed the identification of the site. The identification of Tel Rosh ha'Ayin is also based on the reference to the tower of Aphek by Josephus (War II, 513). This site is likely that of the Aphek that is mentioned in the nineteenth century BC Egyptian texts called the Execration Texts.[84] Tel Rosh ha'Ayin appears to be the accepted location of Biblical Aphek and will be used herein.

La-Sharon[85] – No archaeological information on the site is available because the site's exact location has not been determined. Although problematic, alternative sites for La Sharon do exist, but none are considered viable to current scholars. Alternate name for the city of Aphek is "Sharon" but Aphek has been reliably identified.[86] Another alternative is the Plain of Sharon but the association

[83] Smith, William, Compiler, *Smith's Bible Dictionary – Complete Concordance*, Pages 19, Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, NA.

[84] Eitan, A., *Aphek - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. I, Page 70-73. Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[85] No other information is available, this city is not listed in *The Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations of the Holy Land*, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[86] Eitan, A., *Aphek (Sharon) - The new Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations of the Holy Land*, Pages 70-73, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

of La Sharon with the Plain of Sharon would require either the identification of the site as a region and not a city, or the discovery of yet undiscovered ruins in that region.[87] Both alternatives are not acceptable and La Sharon remains unidentified.

Madon – Clearly associated with Hazor in the north. Garstang considers the name Madon as a possible corruption for Maron or even Merom. That is a particularly interesting theory because the "Waters of Merom" are in the same area where others assume Madon's ruins are found.[88]

Hazor – (Tell el-Qedah) The City of Hazor is primarily identified by default. The importance of the city is widely acknowledged because of its mention in letters to Egypt and others. Additionally it was placed in a strategic location sitting on the roads that branch from there to cover the entire region. Hazor is the largest and most extensive city in the north including Syria. Archeological digs have confirmed significant walls, defenses, road networks and dwellings all supporting the identification of this site as the city of Hazor.[89] In 1875, J. L. Porter identified Tell el-Qedah (also called Tell Waqqas) as a proposed site for the city of Hazor referred to in Joshua. Garstang later investigated that tell in 1924 with trial

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[87] Gophna, R., *Sharon Plain - The Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations of the Holy Land*, Pages 1071-1074, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[88] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 189-92 & 393, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.

[89] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 181-194, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.

soundings that led him to confirm the location as Hazor.[90] The identification of Tell el-Qedah has not been challenged and will be used herein.

Shimron-meron – (Now Kirbet Simuniyeh west of Nazareth[91] or Tel Shimron[92]) There is no archaeological information to confirm the location other than narrative texts, its location, and association with Hazor in the northern campaign.[93] Late Bronze Age remains have been detected at Tell Shimron but no substantial evaluation of those remains is yet available.[94]

Achshaph[95] – Although the exact location is not precisely identified in Garstang's *Joshua and Judges,* the city is associated with the plains in the area of Acco or Acre. One proposed site is Khirget el-Harbj at the southern end of the plain while others identify Tel-Kisan, southeast of Acre, as the biblical Achshaph. Tel-Kisan appears to be the better of the two proposals because Late Bronze and

[90] Yadin, Y., *Hazor - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. II, Page 474-495. Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[91] Smith, William, Compiler, *Smith's Bible Dictionary – Complete Concordance*, Pages 113-114, Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, NA.

[92] Negev, Avraham, Editor, *The Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land, Revised Edition,* Page 346, Thomas Nelson Publishers, New York, 1986.

[93] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 400, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.

[94] Negev, Avraham, Editor, *The Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land, Revised Edition,* Page 346, Thomas Nelson Publishers, New York, 1986.

[95] No other information is available, this city is not listed in *The Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations of the Holy Land*, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

Early Iron Age remains have been found there. No evidence has been discovered to support either theory so the site remains unidentified.[96]

Taanach – Tell Tannuk has retained its ancient name to this date. Additionally the topographical and archaeological characteristics of the hill confirm both biblical and Egyptian text narratives about the site.[97] Taanach's undisputed location has long been established and will not be questioned here.[98]

Megiddo – (Tell Megiddo or Tell el Mutesellim) This location fits both the physical descriptions in the texts and its associative position as referred to from other regional cities. Excavations in 1903 uncovered the city's extensive defensive walls.[99] Because of Megiddo's strategic location it has been an important and militarily formidable city through the Bronze Age as attested by references to it in the Amarna Letters and on Egyptian inscriptions at Karnak. Tell Megiddo is the only site in that meets both the requirements of location and physical stature.[100] The site has long been accepted as Biblical Megiddo and will also be used herein.

Kedesh – (Kedesh Naphtali) Because the term *kedesh* refers to a fortified point and is not a proper noun there is some dispute as to the location of this

[96] Negev, Avraham, Editor, *The Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land, Revised Edition*, Page 14, Thomas Nelson Publishers, New York, 1986.

[97] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 400-402, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.

[98] Glock, A.E., *Taanach - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. I, Page 74-89. Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[99] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 113-114 & 394, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.

particular fortification. Garstang places it very near the "Waters of Meram" in the area of the sea of Galilee while Macmillan's Bible Atlas places this particular Kedesh just north west of Lake Huleh.[101] Aharoni conducted excavations of the Tell Kadesh Naphtali, located in the upper Galilee, in 1953. He uncovered a variety of pottery dating to the Early and Middle Bronze Ages that was very similar to the pottery he discovered at Hazor. In contrast, he discovered very little Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age pottery. In spite of the decrease in the volume of shards, there were adequate remains to conclude that occupation continued throughout.[102]

Jokneam – (Tell Yoqne'am near the east of Carmel[103]) Jokneam is a large mound positioned along the abutment of Mount Carmel and the Jezreel Valley. The tell sets astride one of the major routes that cut across the Carmel Range and is identified by both its association with, and proximity to Hazor. Pottery finds at the

[100] Meyers, E. M., Y., *Megiddo - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. III, Page 830-856. Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[101] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 390, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931. Also refer to Macmillan's map number 57.

[102] Aharoni, Yohanan, *Kedesh (in the upper Galilee) -The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. III, Page 855-856, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[103] Smith, William, Compiler, *Smith's Bible Dictionary – Complete Concordance*, Pages 284, Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, NA.

tell during excavations there match contemporary pottery found in Megiddo and Hazor.[104]

Dor – Archeological work on the site has been hampered by later, Hellenistic ruins that were built on top of the more ancient Dor. It has been determined that the city did once have a Canaanite culture and a strong defensive wall.[105] The Biblical Dor associated with the period of the conquest is identified as a mound named Khirbet el-Burj on the seacoast south of Kibbutz Nahsholim and north of Tantura. To the north and west of the mound are the remains of an ancient port. Greek and Latin sources locate Dor between the Carmel Range and Caesarea. The *Tabula Peutingeriana* map locates Dor just 8 miles north of Caesarea. Eusebius gives the distance from Caesarea as 9 miles (*Onomasticon* 78-9, 136:16). In 1923-24 Garstang conducted excavations on the site that were later expanded in 1950-52 under J. Leibowitz. Based on all of the sources, Khirbet el-Burj is the best location for Joshua's Dor[106] and will be used herein.

Gilgal [107]– The site is only located in approximation. It is between Jerico and the Jordan River to its east. Presumably the spot is represented only by a series

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[104] Ben-Tor, Ammon, *Jokneam -The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. III, Page 805-811, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.
[105] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 372-3, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.
[106] Foerster, G., *Jericho - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. II, Page 334-337. Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.
[107] Gilgal is not listed as one of the cities or sites in *The Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations of the Holy Land*, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

of sandy mounds.[108] Norman McLeod thinks that modern village of Jericho marks the site of Gilgal.[109]

Zertal and Noth have identified a small set of ruins (Tell El 'Unuq) that appear to be a fortification. They propose Tell El 'Unuq to be Gilgal.   The ruins are located next to Wadi Far'ah which also link Shechem, Mount Ebal and Tell Far'ah North (Tirzah) to the Jordan River. Initial surveys of the area revealed a six-foot wide defensive wall made of un-worked stones that enclosed an area of 500 by 800 feet. The name "Gilgal" was not originally the name of a place or city, but rather a term meaning fortified camp. This site proposed by Zertal and Noth shows no signs of permanent housing structures. It has only defensive walls and pottery shards dating its use to the thirteenth and twelfth centuries BC. That pottery closely resembles pottery from the altar on Mount Ebal. The general location, lack of houses, the enclosed defensive walls, and the pottery indicate Tell Unuq as the biblical Gilgal and that site will be used herein.

Tirzah - Tell Far'ah North in the region of Jerico.[110] Although the tell has been identified with a variety of biblical sites current convention identifies it with

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[108] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 380, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.

[109] Smith, William, Compiler, *Smith's Bible Dictionary – Complete Concordance*, Pages 148-149, Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, NA.

[110] Noth makes a passing comment in the following article, written by Zertal, stating that the tell is Tirzah but does not support or expound on his information or work there. Zertal, Adam, *Following the pottery trail – Israel enters Canaan*, Page42, Biblical Archaeology Review, Vol. XVII, No. 5, Sep./Oct. 1991.

Tirzah.[111] That identification is based on a variety of factors: Tell Far'ah is situated

in the territory of Manesseh, which included Tirzah. Tirzah and Hogiah are

mentioned together and the Samaria Ostraca enable location Hogiah a short

distance from Tell Far'ah. Additionally, history of the site as revealed through

archaeology matches the biblical account of the city's history. [112]

[111] DeVaux, Roland, *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations of the Holy Land*, Page 433, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.
[112] DeVaux, Roland, *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations of the Holy Land*, Page 433, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

Chapter 6 - Archeological evidence: Dates and methods of destruction, and cultural shifts associated with the destruction.

Jerico – Although there is evidence of a destruction at Jerico, there is a question as to whether Jerico even existed in the Late Bronze II period. According to Garstang, the archaeological record at the site shows that there was a Canaanite city in place from about 1600-1200 BC. The city was burned in an intense fire about 1200 BCE that was hot enough to crack large rocks and redden mass brick piles.[113] Garstang's findings are strongly contested by Bryant Wood who, publishing the findings of Kathleen Kenyon, re-dates the destruction of Jerico to circa 1550 BC. Wood and Kenyon re-excavated the city following Garstang's work there and they concluded that the city walls Garstang identified as destroyed by Joshua and the Israelites, were actually destroyed in the Middle Bronze Age and around 1550 BC. Furthermore, they claim that the city had no defensive wall at the time of the Israelite invasion.[114] Kenyon suggests the possibility that this destruction dated to third quarter of the fourteenth century is the destruction remembered in Joshua and further suggests that the missing city walls were washed away by erosion.[115] Although no archaeological evidence of this destruction exists,

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[113] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 345-8, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.
[114] Wood, Bryant, *Did the Israelites conquer Jericho – a new look at the archaeological evidence*, Biblical Archaeology Review, Vol. XVI, No. 2, Mar./Apr. 1990.
[115] Kenyon, Kathleen, *Digging up Jericho*, Page 262, Ernest Benn Limited, London, 1957.

she does state that evidence of the population shift does exist to support the biblical conquest.[116] However, Albrecht Alt claimed that the Jerico tradition is a simple etiological story designed to explain the ruins of Jericho and Ai, and perhaps written to empower the house of King David.[117] On the basis of the current state of knowledge the city of Jerico did not exist in the Late Bronze II and therefore could not have been destroyed by Joshua.

Ai- The story of Ai is problematic because excavations at the site et-Tell, near Bethel, have shown that the site referred to as Biblical Ai was destroyed toward in the Early Bronze Age III-B and not re-occupied until the twelfth century BC. The Iron Age I Israelite houses were built directly on top of the ruins of the Early Bronze Age III city with no intervening occupation.[118] That city of Ai could not, therefore, be the Biblical Ai referred to in Joshua.

A variety of theories have been put forward in order to address the issue. The most probable explanation is that the story of Ai actually referred to the city of Bethel. Bethel is located only one mile from the tell currently known as Ai. Bethel fits the general description of Ai and most importantly, Bethel did exist in the time period concerned. Excavations have also revealed a fiery destruction layer that correlates with the period of the conquest, the latter half of the thirteenth century

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[116] Kenyon, K., *Jericho - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. II, Page 559-564. Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.
[117] Noth, *Following the Pottery Trail – Israel Enter Canaan*, Page 47, Biblical Archaeology Review, Vol. XVII, No. 5, Sep./Oct. 1991.

BC. Before the destruction there was a well-built Canaanite town that was replaced with a smaller, poorly built occupation that can be associated with the Israelites. The Israelite culture remained at the tell from the twelfth to the eleventh centuries.[119] Identifying Bethel as biblical Ai is also problematic because there are many references to the city of Bethel in the Bible too. Before Bethel is identified as Ai, an alternate Bethel needs to be identified too.

Ziony Zevit[120] conducted excavations at the site and has an interesting theory that could bridge the gap between the archaeological record and the historic narrative on two key issues. Based on the ruins of buildings, he concluded that the city did exist at the end of the Late Bronze Age but the settlement was significantly smaller and, because the city's walls had been destroyed in the Middle Bronze Age, the Late Bronze Age settlement was un-walled.

The city's defenses were destroyed in the Middle Bronze Age. In an attempt to explain that fact, Zevit proposes that the smaller Canaanite settlement that existed at the site at the end of the Late Bronze Age used the remnants of the old Middle Bronze Age defensive walls and the outer walls of their houses to

[118] Callaway, J., *Ai - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. I, Page 36-52. Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.
[119] Bright, John, *A History of Israel*, Pages 128-132, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1981.
[120] Zevit, Ziony, *The problem of AI*, pages 58-65, Biblical Archaeology Review, Vol.XI, No. 2, Mar/Apr 1985.

functionally enclose their city. That would explain the biblical account's information while remaining inside the confines of the archaeological record.[121]

Zevit proposed an interesting theory that explains some of the problems raised with this site. The initial report of Joshua's spies stated that the population of Ai was 12,000 (Joshua 8:25). Assuming that less than 25 percent of that population were of military age, the city would have less than 3,000 warriors. From that we can see how the spies might have concluded that 2-3,000 men might take the city as they advised Joshua. Based on these assumptions, the spies' advice was flawed. In military terms, an attacking force should always seek a three to one numerical advantage over the defenders. Aggravating the Israelite disadvantage, their first attack would have been up a steep hill into a gap between the wall remnants. Based on the number alone, the first Israelite attack on Ai as reported in Joshua was doomed to tactical failure before it even started.

The terrain at Ai fits the description of The Battle of Ai to the letter. Furthermore, that same description of the terrain does not match any of the other proposed sites including Bethel.[122] Although the archaeological data seems not to support the involvement of Ai in the conquest saga, it is possible. The detailed events that occurred at Ai could only have occurred there at et-Tell so that leads us to a final conclusion. Did the events ever occur? The narrative is convincing and

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[121] Zevit, Ziony, *The problem of AI*, pages 58-65, Biblical Archaeology Review, Vol.XI, No. 2, Mar/Apr 1985.

could refer to a remembered tradition that occurred at a different time but taking the information at hand, we would have to conclude that the conquest of Ai as detailed in the Joshua narrative did not occur. The archaeologically information available support the infiltration theory.

Jerusalem- Discussion of the archaeology of Jerusalem is difficult at best because of the modern Arab homes that are built on top of the ancient remains. Therefore, many areas are off limits to digging. There is an ongoing argument between two camps as to whether a pre-Davidic Jerusalem even existed or not. Both sides support their versions of history in differing interpretations of the archaeological evidence at hand.[123] Additionally, excavations yielded some pot shards from the eleventh century but very few building. According to some scholars, the extra-biblical references to the city supported by the limited archaeological information available supports the existence of a city in keeping with the biblical record. Other scholars have concluded that, if the city even existed at the time of Joshua, the city would have been a minor population center, in contradiction to the biblical account.[124] The limited information available is largely inconclusive but, considering all the data, Jerusalem supports the infiltration theory.

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[122] Zevit, Ziony, *The problem of AI*, pages 60, Biblical Archaeology Review, Vol.XI, No. 2, Mar/Apr 1985.
[123] Steiner, Margreet, *It's not there, archaeology proves a negative*, and Cahill, Jane, *It is there, The archaeological evidence proves it*, Biblical Archaeology Review, Vol. 24, No. 4, Jul./Aug. 1998.

Hebron[125]- No late Bronze Age remains have yet been found.[126]

Jarmuth- To date only initial excavations have been conducted at the site and the results are problematic. During the brief excavations conducted by Ben-Tor in 1970 only Early and Middle Bronze Age artifacts were discovered. The only Late Bronze Age pottery that was discovered was located in a later Byzantine area and was very limited. In view of that fact, either the identification of Tell Jarmuth with the Jarmuth in the biblical account must be questioned, or the biblical account must be questioned.[127] The information available for Tell Jarmuth indicates that the site was unoccupied during the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages. Due to that fact, we must conclude that the site supports the infiltration theory.

Lachish- The archaeological record clearly shows Canaanite occupation throughout the Late Bronze Age. The Canaanite Lachish is one of the cities mentioned in the Amarna letters of the fourteenth century BCE (Numbers 328, 329, 332). The city is further mentioned in a contemporary letter discovered at Tell el-Hesi. In the Bible the city figures into the coalition that fought Joshua at Gibeon and were defeated by the Israelites (Joshua 10:5). From the contents of the Foss Temple and tombs located in the ruins to the city it is possible to date the final

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[124] Mazar, Amihai, *Jerusalem and its vicinity*, Pages 73-73, Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem, 1994.

[125] Although the city is listed in encyclopedia, it is all modern data and not applicable to the study, *Hebron - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[126] Bright, John, *A History of Israel*, Pages 132, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1981.

destruction of the Canaanite city as occurring during the reign of Ramses II, or about 1234 BCE. Albright dates the destruction of the city to the fourth year of Merneptah's reign on the basis of Egyptian hieratic inscription that has "in the fourth year" written on it. If the markings prove to be Merneptah's, the destruction of the city could be tightly dated to 1220 BCE. It is clear that the city was utterly destroyed by fire and left uninhabited for two centuries. The absence of any biblical references to Lachish from the days of Joshua to the days of Rehoboam, Solomon's son, is reflected in the lack of building on the site from the twelfth through the tenth centuries BCE.[128] The information available indicates that Lachish was destroyed in 1234 BCE which supports the conquest theory.

Eglon – Judges 1:27 relates that the tribe of Dan did not drive out the inhabitants of Eglon but did make them tributaries. The City has been inhabited from the Early Bronze Age through the Iron Age. During the period in question the site was inhabited by the fourth city on the site (1350-1200) where Egyptian influence is clear in the discovery of scarabs and other art objects. Some of its buildings were destroyed by an enemy and the first iron objects were found in this destruction layer.[129] The city, it is believed, was destroyed in the late thirteenth

[127] Ben-Tor, A., *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations of the Holy Land*, Pages 544-545, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[128] Ussishkin, D., *Lachish - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. II, Page 735-753. Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[129] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 373-4, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.

century,[130] a date that coincides with the biblical account. The information available supports the conquest theory.

Gezer- The earliest mention of Gezer is in an inscription of Thutmoses III on the walls of the Egyptian in Karnak. The inscriptions are estimated to date from about 1490-1436 BC and relate his victories during his campaign in Asia in 1468 BC. Moreover the mortuary temple of Thutmoses IV is decorated with captives from a city that is suspected to be Gezer. During the Amarna period, fourteenth century BC, Gezer is one of the most prominent of the cities under Egyptian rule and appears in ten of the Amarna letters.[131]

In the period of the conquest, Gezer was one of the united cities from the south that united to oppose the Israelites. Joshua 16:10 and Judges 1:29 both relate that the Israelites slew the Canaanites but they add that the Canaanites remained to live in their midst. That statement is supported by I Kings (2:14-17 where it is related that the city of Gezer was given to king Solomon by the Pharaoh as a dowry on the occasion of the marriage of his daughter with Solomon.

Archaeological excavations started on the site beginning in 1902 with Mcalester and continued over the years by Rowe, Wright, Yadin, and others. Clear evidence of occupation exists in the Early, Middle, and Late Bronze Ages with only minor occupation breaks and cultural shifts. In the late fifteenth century BC the

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[130] Bright, John, *A History of Israel,* Pages 128-132, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1981.

city was largely undefended. The raid of Thutmoses IV may have occurred during this weakened state. In the Late Bronze Age the city witnessed a decline even though no destruction layer is associated with that decline and the limited culture that followed used unimpressive buildings built on a new orientation. One possibility for the shift is an Israelite destruction followed by a brief occupation however the literary tradition of the bible is clear that Gezer was not taken in the conquest. More than likely that strange occupational shift that occurred at the end of the Late Bronze Age can be attributed to the arrival of the Philistines in the area. A Israelite occupation does occur at Gezer, but not until the tenth century BC.[132] Excavation notes published confirm the Late Bronze Age existence of city walls that were reused in the Early Iron Age.[133] The archaeological information available indicates support for the infiltration theory.

Debir- The City was completely destroyed by an intense fire. There was a culture shift following the destruction that is consistent with Israelite culture during the period. The destruction of the city is associated with the late thirteenth century. Some scholars currently suspect that Debir is not Khirbet Rabud but instead Tell Beit Mirsim. If that is discovered to be true, then the city did exist at the end of the

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[132] Dever, S., *Gezer - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. I, Page 428-443. Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.
[133] Dever, W., Editor, *Gezer II: report of the 1967-79 seasons in field I and II*, Annual of the Hebrew Union College, Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology, Jerusalem, 1974.

Late Bronze Age but did not suffer a violent destruction.[134] The fiery destruction combined with the cultural shift indicates strong support for the conquest theory.

Geder- Not located. No archaeological information on the site is available, therefore the data is inconclusive.[135]

Hormah - Although Garstang was unable to identify the site in other than general terms[136] Aharoni conducted a surface survey of the area of Tell Masos in 1964. During that survey he discovered a Middle Bronze Age II rampart and the remains of an Iron Age I settlement. Before that discovery the Tell Masos was believed to be from the Roman and Byzantine periods only. Excavations have revealed that the Middle Bronze Age community was destroyed by fire and not rebuilt.[137] Although the information on Tell Masos remains limited, no evidence of Late Bronze Age occupation has yet been discovered. [138]

An Early Iron Age settlement was built on the site at the end of the thirteenth century BC. That new settlement was built in a different pattern from the earlier Bronze Age settlements, and was similar to other Israelite settlements in the

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[134] Bright, John, *A History of Israel,* Pages 128-132, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1981.
[135] The site in not listed in *The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land,* Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.
[136] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history,* Page 384, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.
[137] Kempinski, A., *Tell Masos (Khirbet El-Meshash) - The Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations of the Holy Land,* Pages 816-819, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.
[138] Bright, John, *A History of Israel,* Pages 132, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1981.

region. The new structures were simple and crudely made.[139] Based on the information currently available Tell Masos supports the infiltration theory.

Arad- The city of Arad is mentioned in the Biblical account as a fortified Canaanite city in the eastern Negev. The king of Arad is the same king that prevented Moses and the Israelites of the Exodus from crossing the Negev to get to the Judean Hills. (Numbers 21:1 and 33:40). Arad appears again in Joshua 12:14 but nothing specific is mentioned about its conquest or destruction.

Exploration of Arad first started in 1962 under the supervision of Aharoni and Amiran. Initially excavations concentrated on the main mound but spread to the lower city in later seasons. The city was occupied continually from the Early Bronze Age I through the end of the Middle Bronze Age II without significant breaks in occupation. The city's defenses were extensive and show obvious knowledge of military planning and organization.

New settlements appeared at Arad after a period of about 1,500 years. The first of the new settlements apparently date back to the twelfth to the eleventh centuries BC. Minimal remains of Israelite Iron Age I settlements have been identified in limited quantities. Later, strong fortresses from the days of King Solomon to the Roman period appear with settlements extending from the

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[139] Kempinski, A., *Tell Masos (Khirbet El-Meshash) - The Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations of the Holy Land*, Pages 816-819, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

fortresses.[140] Because of the lack of archaeological evidence and questions about the very location of the city it must be concluded that this city does not support the Biblical account of the conquest. [141]

The information available indicates that no significant Late Bronze Age settlement existed at the site. Furthermore, there is evidence of very minor Israelite settlement at the beginning of the Early Iron Age. Therefore the data supports the Infiltration theory.

Libnah- Dr. Bliss and Prof. Mcalester investigated the site in 1899. They concluded that the site it had been occupied since about 1600 BCE. They arrived at their conclusions by the discovery of both Egyptian scarabs and Mycenaean pottery during their excavations. Though they did excavate the city walls, they determined that the walls were not built until the Early Iron Age.[142] No other archaeological information on the site is available so that data is inconclusive.[143]

Adullam- No archaeological information on the site is available.[144]

Makkedah- No archaeological information on the site is available.[145]

[140] Aharoni, Y., *Arad - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. I, Page 81-89. Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.
[141] Amiran, Ruth, *Arad - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. I, Page 75-81. Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.
[142] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 391-3, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.
[143] The site in not listed in *The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.
[144] The site in not listed in *The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.
[145] The site in not listed in *The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

Bethel- Judges 1: 22 – 26 relates the fall of the city to the house of Joseph after their spy discovered a route into the city. Further, the bible relates that the Israelite resettled the site following their conquest.

In 1927 Albright and Wiener dug a test pit in the mound and discovered a massive city wall. Albright's finds demonstrated that there were both Canaanite and Israelite occupations at that site. There were two phases of Late Bronze Age occupation. These two phases represent the finest architectural phase of the city's history. In contrast, the Israelite (Iron Age I) cities are ramshackle huts in comparison to their Canaanite predecessors. The early Israelite pottery is poorly made and dominated by cooking and storage jars.[146] The timely presence of a destruction layer, added to the clear cultural shift indicates that the archaeological record supports the biblical account.

Tappuah- Judges 1:27 relates that Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Taanach and then remained among the Israelites. No other archaeological information is available.[147]

Hepher- No archaeological information on the site is available.[148]

Aphek- Judges 1:30 relates that Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Aphek and the Canaanites remained among the Israelites while the Joshua narrative

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[146] Kelso, J., *Bethel - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. I, Page 190-193, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.
[147] The site in not listed in *The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

clearly states that the city was captured (Joshua 12:21). Archaeological excavations

on the site started in 1935 under the supervision of J. Ory. Those excavations, and

the works that followed, revealed the occupation of a typical Canaanite society

throughout the Bronze Age that continued into the Iron Age. They revealed phases

in the city's occupation but no significant destruction layers or cultural shifts.[149]

The archaeology appears to support the Judges account and the infiltration theory.

La-Sharon- Not located. No archaeological information on the site is

available.[150]

Madon- No archaeological information on the site is available.[151]

Hazor- The fire that destroyed Canaanite Hazor was fierce and exceeded

2350 degrees Fahrenheit and left ashes three feet deep. Whoever burned the city

also deliberately destroyed the statuary and took time to chisel each statue into

parts and scatter the pieces. Yigael Yadin initially excavated the site in the 1950s.

After four seasons of digging Yadin dated the destruction of the city as circa 1230

BC.[152] Some inconsistencies do exist with regard to Hazor. No evidence of Late

Bronze Age City walls has been discovered. This is true not only in Hazor but in

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[148] The site in not listed in *The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[149] Eitan, A., *Aphek - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. I, Page 70-73, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[150] The site in not listed in *The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[151] The site in not listed in *The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[152] Ben-tor, Amnon, and Rubiato, Maria, *Excavating Hazor – Did the Israelites destroy the Canaanite city?* Biblical Archaeology Review, Vol. 25, No.3, May/Jun. 1999.

other prominent Canaanite cities like Megiddo. The huge fortified walls and their related ramparts do exist in the Middle Bronze Age City but in the Late Bronze Age the city was not walled.[153] Among the Canaanite cultural record discovered at the site was a shrine. Following the destruction and built on top of that Canaanite shrine was an Israelite *Bamah* built in the eleventh century BCE.[154] Archaeological evidence discovered at Hazor clearly supports the biblical account of the conquest.

Shimron-meron- No archaeological information on the site is available.[155]

Achshaph- No archaeological information on the site is available.[156]

Taanach- The earliest references to Taanach is in the fifteenth century BC inscription in Karnak, Egypt. In 1468, Thutmoses III's first campaign into Asia claims to have captured Taanach enroute to Megiddo through the valley. Taanach is listed among the Amarna letters, #248:14. Later, in 918, Shishak I listed Taanach as a city captured by his forces. Eusebius' *Onomasticon* indicates that Taanach was a "very large city" in the third century AD.[157]

With respect to the conquest, Taanach's role appears rather confused. Taanach is discussed as the site of a battle led by Deborah and Barak against the

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[153] Finkelstein, Israel, and Ussishkin, David, *Back to Megiddo*, Biblical Archaeology Review, Vol. 20, No. 1, Jan./Feb. 1994.
[154] Nakhai, Beth, *What's a Bamah? How sacred space functioned in ancient Israel*, Biblical Archaeology Review, Pages 19-29, Vol. 20, No. 3, May/Jun. 1994.
[155] The site in not listed in *The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.
[156] The site in not listed in *The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

Canaanites, led by Sisera (Judges 5:19). In contradiction, Joshua is given credit for taking the king of Taanach and putting the city to the sword (Joshua 12:21). The city was assigned to Issachar and Asher but later given to Manasseh (Joshua 17:11 and I Chronicles 7:29) because of their failure to occupy the city due to the strength of the Canaanites (Judges 1:27). In time the city was put to tribute (Judges 1:28).

E. Sellin conducted the first excavations of Taanach with the assistance of Schumacher starting in 1904. Among their important discoveries were some Akkadian cuneiform tablets. Sellin found no fortifications or other "significant structures" and concluded that the city was defended by a series of small, fortified buildings. He credited the earliest building to between 1500 and 1350 BC. Albright later reviewed Sellin's data and credited the same sites with fifteenth and fourteenth centuries BC.

Taanach continued to be a substantial city until it suffered a major destruction, credited to Thutmoses III around the year 1468 BC. The settlement that followed the destruction was modest. Cuneiform tables found at that level are dated to 1450 BC as were the tablets found earlier by Sellin. Archaeological record reveals no information to show that the site was occupied during the thirteenth century BC. There is information indicating that the site was greatly weakened but occupied from the twelfth to the tenth century by Canaanite communities up until

[157] Glock, A. E., *Taanach - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. III, Page 1138-1147, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York,

the site was destroyed by Shishak about 918 BC.[158] The implication of that data is

that the city was unoccupied during the thirteenth century BC.

The archaeological record shows no evidence of destruction or cultural shift

that could indicate conquest by Joshua as listed in chapter 12. Additionally, the

virtually continuous occupation through to the Iron Age indicates that Canaanite

Taanach must have co-existed with the Israelites. The evidence supports the

Judges version of the Israelite conquest and the infiltration theory.

Megiddo- Archaeological excavations conducted at the mound have

revealed that from the Early and Middle Bronze Ages, Megiddo was a major city

with significant defenses. In spite of that fact, the city was not mentioned in

contemporary historical sources until the fifteenth century BC when it appears in

the inscription of Thutmoses III. The chroniclers of the Pharaoh recorded that

Megiddo led a confederation of rebel Canaanite cities attempting to overthrow

Egyptian rule in the region. They further relate that the Egyptian army destroyed

the rebel force and sacked their cities. In Amarna letter number 244, the king of

Megiddo requested assistance from the Pharaoh by asking for the return of

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[158] Glock, A. E., *Taanach - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land,*
Vol. III, Page 1138-1147, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York,
1993.

Egyptian troops formerly stations there. All these extra biblical references to the city show its importance and power in the region.[159]

Judges 1:27 relates that Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Megiddo and that they remained among the Israelites. Exactly how and when the city fell to the Israelites is not clear. The next biblical reference to the city (I Kings 9:15) in under the reign of king Solomon when he ordered the city's fortifications reinforced.

Excavations have uncovered a clear destruction layer relating to the transition from the Late Bronze to the Early Iron Ages. In spite of this destruction, the Bronze Age culture appears to have continued because of their reuse of statuary and public buildings.[160] Archaeologically, some inconsistencies do exist with regard to Megiddo. No evidence of Late Bronze Age city walls has been discovered. This is true not only in Megiddo, but in other prominent Canaanite cities like Hazor. The huge fortified walls and their related ramparts do exist in the Middle Bronze Age city, but in the Late Bronze Age the city was not walled.[161] The available data clearly supports the conquest theory.

Kedesh- Ahoaroni conducted excavations of the Tell Kadesh Naphtali, located in the upper Galilee, in 1953. The pottery that he uncovered (dating to the

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[159] Meyers, E., *Megiddo - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. II, Page 830-847. Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.
[160] Yadin, Y., *Megiddo - The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. II, Page 847-856. Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

Early and Middle Bronze Ages that was very similar to the pottery he discovered at Hazor. In contrast, he discovered very little Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age pottery. In spite of the decrease in the volume of shards, there were adequate remains to conclude that occupation continued throughout the Bronze Age and into the Early Iron Age.[162] His report on the site does not mention a destruction layer or evidence of a significant cultural shift. Given the fact that the excavations were only preliminary, it can still be assumed that a destruction layer would have been evident and that a cultural shift in the pottery assemblages would have been noted. For that reason, we must conclude that the archaeological evidence supports both the Joshua and the Judges narratives of the occupation.

Jokneam- Jokneam is first mentioned in association with Thutmose III's campaign into Canaan during the first third of the fifteenth century BC. The city is 113 on Thutmose's list. The city is also mentioned by Eusebius under the name Kammuna (116:21).

The last Late Bronze Age occupation phase (stratum XIX) was destroyed in a great conflagration that left debris over a meter deep. The pottery associated with that phase is largely local ware but remains of imported Cypriot and Mycenaean vessels were also found. The city's mention in Thutmose's list serves to confirm

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[161] Finkelstein, Israel, and Ussishkin, David, *Back to Megiddo*, Biblical Archaeology Review, Vol. 20 No. 1, Jan./Feb. 1994.
[162] Aharoni, Yohanan, *Kedesh (in the upper Galilee) -The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. III, Page 855-856, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

the city's existence in the Late Bronze Age I. Currently, the archaeological data available does not permit the dating of the destruction except in broad terms: somewhere between the late thirteenth and early twelfth century.

There appears to be a break in occupation between the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age although the duration has not yet been determined. The first Early Iron Age occupation layer (stratum XVII) was built similarly to the Late Bronze Age settlement and was similarly unfortified.[163] Based on that information we must conclude that the data supports the conquest theory.

Dor- The first biblical reference to Dor appears in Joshua in connection with the Israelite conquest of Canaan. Dor was one of the cities that united under the leadership of Jabin, the King of Hazor, to fight the Israelites (Joshua 11: 1-2). The king of Dor was defeated in the battle that followed and (Joshua 12:23) was put to the sword. Judges 1:27 relates that Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants and Dor was not conquered until the time of David. Joshua 17: 11 and Judges 1: 27-28 both includes Dor with Taanach and Megiddo among the Canaanite cities that the Israelites could not take under Joshua's leadership.

The archaeological record shows that Dor was a Canaanite culture through the end of the Bronze Age and that, following its destruction, a new culture supplanted it. There is an ash layer between the two cultural layers that show the

city was put to the torch.[164] There is evidence of destructions of two Phoenician cultures at Dor in the early Iron Age, circa 1000 BC and 1050 BC respectively. These destructions can be credited to either earthquakes, or the Canaanite re-conquest of the city in reaction to Phoenician pressures elsewhere. Either way, the destruction is not credited to an Israelite invasion.[165] Archaeological information available at the site does support the Judges account and implies its support to the infiltration theory.

Gilgal- Gilgal is cited in the text as the place of initial encampment for the Israelites entering the land of Canaan. The site is described as a temporary camp so little would remain in the form of artifacts. One possibility is that Gilgal was used as a logistical supply point where the army of Joshua could be re-supplied from friendly Israelites east of the Jordan River.[166] Zertal and Noth's proposed site (Tell El 'Unuq) meets the biblical description of the camp and supports the conquest theory because of its location, the lack of housing indicates its temporary use. The thirteenth and twelfth century Israelite pottery found there further indicates its repeated use during the period of the conquest. The presence of Gilgal alone supports the Joshua narrative and the conquest theory.

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[163] Ben-Tor, Ammon, *Jokneam -The new encyclopedia of archaeological excavation of the Holy Land*, Vol. III, Page 805-811, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1993.

[164] Garstang, John, *Joshua Judges – the foundations of Bible history*, Page 372-3, Constable & Co. LTD, Press, London, 1931.

[165] Stewart, Andrew, *A death at Dor*, Biblical Archaeology Review, Vol. 19, No. 2, Mar./Apr. 1993.

Tirzah- The Late Bronze Age remains of the city were poorly preserved and are still under study. They cover a period of about three hundred years. No town plan could be reconstructed because the traces are too fragmentary and scattered. Some indications of a rampart and the western gate do survive that are attributed to the Late Bronze Age. Earlier houses were well built with two stone faces while houses of this period were built more simply, but along the same plans. Superimposed floor levels and wall repairs indicate reuse of buildings over a long period. Contemporary, Cypriot, and Mycenean pottery assemblages were found throughout the site and in its associated tombs. Cultic relics found at the beginning of the Early Iron Age strata and the use of non-Israelite house plans both infer the continuation of the culture into the ninth and tenth centuries BC. Destruction of the site did occur in level VIIb and was followed by the abandonment of the site.[167]

Roland DeVaux credits the destruction of the city with the Israelite conquest of the land in accordance with the book of Joshua but does not support his opinion with any data.[168] Based on the data presented above, we must conclude that the evidence associated with Tell el-Far'ah supports the infiltration theory.

[166] Smith, William, Compiler, *Smith's Bible Dictionary – Complete Concordance*, Pages 113-114, Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, NA.

[167] Chambon, Alain, *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, Pages 433-440, Stern, Ephraim, Editor, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1993.

[168] DeVaux, Roland, *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, Page 433, Stern, Ephraim, Editor, Israel Exploration Society and Carta, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1993.

Chapter 7 - Terrain analysis

Consideration of the terrain, as terrain applies to the conquest of the Promised Land, can be broken down into three elements: the Canaanite road network, the regional topography with its associated hydrology, and the military aspects of the terrain. The road network as it existed, effected the tactical mobility and logistical capabilities of all sides. But more importantly, the condition, size, and orientation of a road network in a given area indicate the regional importance of that road or city. The topography of the area is important because it relates to the use of the land, and tactically, the topography effects the sophistication of effective weaponry. The hydrology of the region would clearly be important because of the arid nature of the region. Furthermore, access to water clearly effects not only attacking armies but also the communities that follow them. In order to complete the analysis, it is critical to investigate the tactical and strategic significance of the terrain as it applied to both the Israelite and the Canaanite forces.

It is important to note the distinctions between the two forces involved in the conflict before the analysis in order to understand the applications of the information on the strategy of the campaign. Of course there are no surviving battle plans to show what was, or was not a consideration of the time, but modern successes and failures do logically apply.

Before continuing we must establish the state of the Canaanite military. The study of ancient warfare is based on written sources and a wealth of pictorial documents such as tomb paintings and carved reliefs. The two decisive weapons innovations of that time were the horse drawn chariot and the composite bow. The horse provides speed and shock. The chariot provides a relatively stable platform from which the warrior can use his weapon, and the composite bow allowed lethal delivery of the weapon from great range. Their extensive use in the Egyptian army provided them with a distinct tactical advantage. The Late Bronze Age chariot was light, harnessed to two horses and carried two warriors: a driver and a combatant. The Egyptian word for chariot indicates

Canaanite charioteer wounded by arrow (Decoration on chariot of Thutmose IV)

that it originally came from Canaan. Egyptian depictions show that the Canaanite chariots were lighter than those of the Egyptians were.[169] (Refer to the image above, **Image A**)[170]

More biblical examples of Canaanite chariots do exist in the text. Specifically, as the Canaanites massed at the Waters of Merom Joshua 11:4 relates

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[169] Ben-Tor, Ammon, Editor, *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel*, Pages 244-245, Yale university Press, New Haven and London, 1991

that they came *"...with horses and chariots many."* Then God told Joshua not to worry and ordered him to *"... slay their horses and burn their chariots with fire."* (Joshua 11:6). In Judges 1:19, *"And the Lord was with Judah: and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountain: but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley because they had chariots of iron."* In Judges 4:15, *"And the Lord discomfited Sisera and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak, so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet."*

The Israelite army was a foot-infantry force while the Canaanites were largely a chariot-based force. In a modern tactical analysis, mobile and protective terrain for foot forces is the opposite of the mobile and protective terrain for mounted forces. In other words, infantry soldiers can move with protection and fight to their best advantage in terrain that is restrictive. Hilly, rocky, and forested terrain offers the infantry soldier the advantage of protection, a hiding place, and it allows him to close with his opponent within the effective range of his weapons. That is not to say that an infantry based force would not like the simplicity and ease of movement offered by less rouged terrain. When the situation permits, they would use the roads and plains for logistics and faster movement but in operations against a mounted force like chariots they would tactically prefer the protection of restrictive terrain.

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[170] Anaroni, Yohanan, *The Macmillan Bible Atlas, Completely Revised Third Edition*, Page53, Simon & Shuster Macmillan Company, USA, 1993.

The opposite is true for mounted warriors. The chariots of the Late Bronze Age were used just as armor is used today. The chariot offered protection, speed, shock, and a platform from which to use other weapons. Chariots were used to give chase to a fleeing enemy and run them down, or to break up massed attacking infantry formations. In order to do so they require open terrain to maneuver consequently mounted (chariot) forces prefer roads and open plains.

a)   **The road network –**

The Land of Canaan, at the time of the conquest did have an extensive road network that connected the key cities. The roads of the day can be broken down into three categories: international highways, intra-regional roads, and local trails. The important international highways were "the way of the sea" and "the kings highway." The way of the sea, obviously ran the along the coastline. The most important section of the way of the sea was later know as the Via Maris. (Refer to the following map, **Map H**[171])

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[171] Pritchard, James, Editor, *The times Atlas of the Bible*, Page 58, Times Books, London, 1994.

1. The topography of Palestine

Biblical routes
1. The road to Bashan
2. The way of the plain
3. The way to the Jordan
4. The way of Beth-horon
5. The way of the Arabah
6. The way of the tent dwellers
7. The way to Moab
8. The way to Edom
9. The way to the land of the Philistines
10. The way of the wilderness of Moab
11. The way of the Atharim
12. The way to Shur
13. The way to the Arabah
14. The way to the Red Sea
15. The way of the wilderness of Edom
16. The way to Mount Seir

Over this route passed messengers, caravans, and military expeditions of all ages. The Via Maris originated in the Egyptian border city of *Silu* and continued north with several branches. The importance of the road to the various Egyptian empires is evident by her commitment to building and garrisoning forts along the road's length.[172]

The Via Maris connected the kings and merchants of Africa and Syria. Control of those routes has long been critical to power. For that reason, the largest and best defended of the Canaanite cities grew up along its length.[173] The Via Maris extended from Egypt in the south-west, through the Megiddo Pass and extended past the Sea of Galilee to Hazor and on to Damascus and Mesopotamia to the north-east. The Megiddo Pass is a strategic choke point guarding the intersection of the Via Maris and the Jezreel Valley.[174] Just off of the Via Maris a branch road breaks east through the Valley of Aijalon (Eglon), where it is dominated by the city of Gezer, and continues to Jerusalem.[175]

The King's Highway was clearly second in importance to the Via Maris. The name is taken from the biblical story in the Book of Numbers. The King's Highway ran the length of the Trans-Jordan highlands extending from the Gulf of

[172] Aharoni, Y., *The Land of the Bible – a historical geography*, Pages 39-43, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1967.
[173] Aharoni, Y., *The Land of the Bible – a historical geography*, Pages 39-43, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1967.
[174] Yadin, Y., *Hazor*, Page 207, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1975.

Aqaba, through the desert regions south and east of the Dead Sea, all the way to the city of Damascus. Although the primary users of the highway was by nomadic caravans, the King's Highway was the only real competitor with the Via Maris for trade moving through the region. Particularly for the incense-trade coming north from South Arabia. In contrast to the Via Maris, the King's Highway was largely void of major fortified cities and remained generally under the control of the semi-nomadic residents of the area. Key population centers along its length include Bashan, Gilead, the Moabite Plateau and Seir-Edom. Near the southern end of the road, the King's Highway had two branches that ran into Egypt allowing lateral, or alternate trade routes.[176]

Internal roads served to connect the various cities within their regions and to connect the main international roads with each other. Because of the topography of the regions, most of the internal roads were latitudinal and connect the two main highways; longitudinal roads were less common.[177]

The third category of road is the local trail. Those trails were little more than unimproved footpaths that served the immediate residents only. They are of little value to the discussion at hand and will not be addressed here.

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[175] Yadin, Y., *Hazor*, Page 201, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1975.
[176] Donnan, Graeme, *The King's Highway – A journey through 1000 years of civilisation (civilization) in the land of Jordan*, Pages 29-38, Al Kutba Publishers, Amman, 1996
[177] Aharoni, Y., *The Land of the Bible – a historical geography*, Pages 39-57, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1967.

b) The topography –

The topography of the region is complex and greatly varied. The area can be generally divided regionally into four separate terrain types: the coastal zone, the central mountain range, the Jordan rift, and the Trans-Jordan highlands. (Refer to the following map, **Map I**[178])

The coastal zone is narrow in the north but broadens as it continues south toward Egypt. The coastline itself is characterized by a narrow strip of sand dunes that required the Via Maris to move slightly inland. Coastal population centers tend to be placed inland along the Via Maris and not on the coast itself. Rich Alluvial soil and an abundance of springs made the coastal plain the richest of the regions and, normally, the most densely populated. The coastal zone can be broken down further into regions. They are The Plain of Acco, The Jezreel Valley, The Sharon, The Philistine Coast, and The Shephelah.[179]

The Central Mountain Range was characterized by hills rising sharply from the coastal plain. The range is wider in the north and narrow in the south. In antiquity, the mountains were forested with oak trees. Those trees were cut when the land was settled and farms or fruit trees replaced the oak trees. The Central Mountains can be further broken into sub-regions: The Galilee, Mount Ephraim, The Judean Hill Country, and The Eastern Negev.

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[178] Basic map taken from Pritchard, James, Editor, *The times Atlas of the Bible*, Page 62, Times Books, London, 1994, with data added by the author.
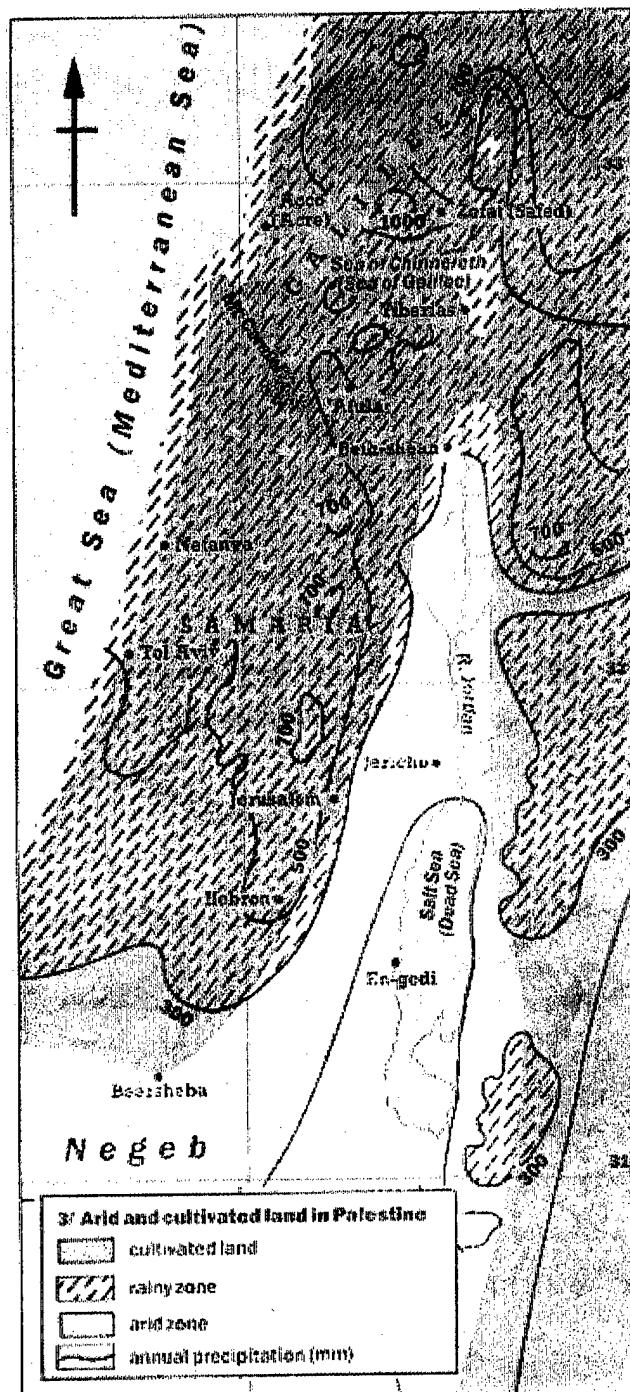
Aharoni, Y., *The Land of the Bible – a historical geography*, Pages 17-24, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1967.

The Galilee is the highest and northernmost of the mountain regions. The region is cool and lush with vegetation. The upper Galilee is the highest point in the region with a current elevation of over 3000 feet above sea level. The lower Galilee's maximum elevation is just less than 2000 feet above sea level.

Mount Ephraim is named for the tribe of Ephraim. In reality, the tribe of Ephraim only settled the southern part of the region. The tribe of Manasseh settled the southern half. High mountains characterize the southern half of Mount Ephraim with a plateau rising to more than 3000 feet above sea level. The *tera rosa* soil is fertile and supports good vegetal growth. The northern half is lower and comprised mostly of less fertile limestone. Although the south was less fertile it is distinguished by good road network that supported trade.

The Judean Hill Country is very similar in composition to southern Mount Ephraim. It is a limestone plateau with steep slopes and a good north to south road near the eastern edge. The main cities of hill country were founded along that road. They are Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Beth-Zur, and Hebron. The northern part of this region is lush and can support crops. Further south rainfall is lower. That part of the region is better suited for pastoral grazing.

The Eastern Negev (Negeb) is a continuation of the central mountain range. Here the elevation declines to only 1500 to 1800 feet above sea level. As the elevation drops and the rainfall of the region drops off too. This is the beginning of

the semi-arid Negev that characterizes the region. The main biblical cities were Arad and Hormah.[180]

The Jordan Rift is simply the Jordan Valley or the Great Rift Valley. That valley is a fault line that runs from the Gulf of Aqaba north, through the Dead Sea, following the path of the Jordan River through the Sea of Galilee and continuing north into the current state of Lebanon. The fault line is a deep valley allowing water to flow from Hermon down to the Dead Sea. The Dead Sea is the lowest point on earth. The valley is further divided into The Huleh Valley, The Chinnereth (The Sea of Galilee), The Jordan Valley, The Dead Sea, and The Arabah.[181]

The Trans-Jordanian Highlands are formed from the mountain tableland and is comprised mostly of limestone. Beneath the limestone is a deep layer of hard Nubian sandstone that comes to the surface in the southern and western extremes of the highlands. The sandstone is impervious to water forming perennial rivers in the region. In the west the steep slopes descend to the Jordan Valley. At the heights, the mountains enjoy increased rainfall and cooler weather. The key feature of the Jordanian Highlands at the time of the conquest was the King's Highway, which

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[180] Aharoni, Y., *The Land of the Bible – a historical geography*, Pages 24-29, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1967.
[181] Aharoni, Y., *The Land of the Bible – a historical geography*, Pages 29-33, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1967.

ran through the center of the region. Continuing to the eastern extremes of the highlands, both the terrain and the weather transitions to the arid Syrian Desert.[182]

c) The terrain as it applies to Joshua chapter 12 –

Considerations in the tactical terrain available to Joshua's forces does provide some, limited insights. Assuming that the terrain has not significantly changed over the millennia, superimposing an overlay of conquered cities we can see the distances that Joshua's forces traveled. From that one thing seems clear; Joshua's operations were largely restricted to the more mountainous regions of the Promised Land. (Refer to the facing map, **Map J**[183]) Considering the Canaanite's extensive dependence on the chariot and the Israelites relatively simplistic weaponry, their desire to restrict their operations from the plains, where chariots are ideal, is logical. By restricting their operations to more mountainous terrain, the Israelites denied their enemy the efficient use of their best weapons.

Examining the terrain in an effort to answer the question of the sequence of battles listed in Joshua 12 reveals no additional information. By superimposing an overlay of the cities listed in Joshua 12 on top of a topographical map, we see that Joshua's military activities were not restricted to any one particular region. Additionally, there are no clear indications that cities were bypassed because of constraint of terrain such as rivers, steep ridges or impassable mountains.

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[182] Aharoni, Y., *The Land of the Bible – a historical geography*, Pages 33-38, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1967.

Map: Identified Royal Canaanite cities, showing locations including Kadesh, Lake Huleh, Sea of Chinnereth (Sea of Galilee), Hazor, Madon, Achshaph, Shimron, Jokneam, Dor, Megiddo, Taanac, Naphoth, Tappuah, Bethel, Gezer, Makkedah(?), Jarmuth, Jerusalem, Jericho, Adullam, Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron, Debir, Salt Sea (Dead Sea), Arad, Hormah, along the Great Sea (Mediterranean Sea) and the River Jordan, in the land of Canaan.

[183] Aharoni, Y., Avi-Yohah, M., Rainey, A., and Safrai, Z., *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*, Completely Revised Third Edition, Map 63, Page 55, Sinom & Schuster Macmillan Company, New York.

The analysis of the terrain with respect to the sequence of the 31 cities listed (Joshua Chapter 12) adds no particularly helpful information.

d) Military applications of the terrain

Tactically speaking, the Israelite military conquest of the Land of Canaan would today be termed a light Infantry force fighting a more technically advance mobile force. Canaanite society was a military aristocracy based in the feudal system that used, and dependence on the chariot as the basis for its strength. Alt believed that the Hyksos introduced both the horse and the chariot to the region on their way into Egypt.[184] A foot Infantry force fighting a mobile force would only meet with success if they were able to at least neutralize the advantages of the chariot. Better yet, an Infantry force could put the chariots in a position of greater weakness by denying them their very strengths: mobility and protection.

The battle of Deborah is an obvious example of such a tactic from the biblical narrative. In the story we see how the Israelites lured the Canaanite chariots into the swampy ground where their wheels became mired in the mud causing them to loose mobility. An immobile chariot is then easy prey for an infantry force.

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[184] Alt, Albrecht, with Wilson, R., Translator, *Essays on the Old Testament, History and Religion*, Page 184 and 182, Doubleday & Company, Garden City, New York, 1967.

The same general observations can be made about the terrain that the Israelite chose to fight in. As an infantry force, they restricted their operations, at least initially to the hill country. Furthermore they added to the tactical advantage they had in hilly or rouged terrain by using surprise and intelligence. The Israelite use of spies during the conquest is discussed else where in this work but example of the use of tactical surprise are well know. In the battle of Ai, Joshua set a trap by deceiving the King of Ai into thinking that the Israelites were in flight and ambushed the pursuing Canaanite force. In the battle at the Waters of Merom, Joshua surprised the combined Canaanite force under the leadership of the King of Hazor to win a decisive victory. In modern terms, the advantageous use of terrain, and proper use of other fundamentals including information intelligence and tactical surprise are considered force multipliers.

When we apply the considerations of the terrain to the battles listed we can see that the Israelites avoided cities that were too far west, out of the hill country. Furthermore the cities that they are credited with attacking were either sitting on mountain passes, or the Canaanites left their home cities in order to attack the Israelites. The cities built along restrictive passes would have been relatively easy to attack for an infantry force because the infantry would move down the mountain ridges, using them as their highways. Generally, fortifications built to secure commercial routes are built to defend the road and are not built to defend from the opposite direction.

Although no information is available, the Canaanites could have committed another error that effected their defenses. In other military conflicts, prior to the Israelite invasion, the Canaanites fought against other civilizations with similarly military traditions. Because these similar forces fought each other with similar weapons, it is possible that the Canaanites became complacent fighting other chariot based military forces. Therefore, they might have neglected, or even discounted, other forms of combat like light infantry. If that were true, their defenses and their tactics would not have evolved adequately to adjust to the new, Israelite infantry threat.

Chapter 8 – Summary and conclusions

a) The Apiru and the Habiru –

The Habiru were introduced in detail beginning on page 4. Although there are no direct correlations between the Habiru and the Israelites, the linguistic connections appear obvious. Whether these Habiru were related to the Hebrew Israelites is unknown but, because they too were on the fringes of society, their potential support for the invading Israelites could only add to the strength and momentum of the incoming Israelite population. The presence of the Habiru indicates at least slight support for the infiltration and social revolution theories.

This conclusion is problematic because there is no evidence of Habiru existence in the thirteenth century BCE. The fact that the Habiru existed a century before the Israelite occupation of the Land of Canaan is relevant, but only slightly. This discussion is only important to show that either the Habiru, or people like them could have aided the Israelite attack. That aide would have been tactically significant in their success.

b) Indications of popular assistance

Examples of the local population aiding the attacking Israelite forces have already been discussed in detail on pages 15-17. The key issues to focus on are the implications of their support. As an element in the social revolution theory the

population rebelled against their overlords. If elements of the population were prone to overthrow their leadership then they would have a predisposition to aid an attacking army, particularly if they identified with that attacking force. Whether these people offering assistance and information were Habiru or simply people on the edges of society is not particularly important. What is important is the presence of an element of society that was ready to aid the Israelites. The presence of that support indicates support for the social uprising theory in connection with the conquest theory.

c)   Summary of archaeological findings

The following table (Table 1) is a condensed summary of the information and conclusions reached in chapter six. The table is organized using the sequence of the list of kings in Joshua chapter 12. The applicable date correlates with the information available on that site. The conclusion column lists the applicable conclusion of the author based on the information of each site as discussed in chapter six.

City name	Date	Key information	Conclusion
Jerico	1200	Population shift No destruction	Conquest
Ai	1220	Unoccupied No destruction	Infiltration

Jerusalem	LBA - EIA	No destruction	Infiltration
Hebron	LBA - EIA	No Information	Inconclusive
Jarmuth	LBA - EIA	Unoccupied	Infiltration
Lachish	1220	Destruction	Conquest
Eglon	1220	Destruction	Conquest
Gezer	LBA - EIA	Cultural Shift	Infiltration
Debir	LBA - EIA	Destruction Cultural shift	Conquest
Geder	LBA - EIA	No Information	Inconclusive
Hormah	LBA - EIA	Unoccupied	Infiltration
Arad	LBA -EIA	Unoccupied Cultural shift	Infiltration
Libnah	LBA - EIA	No Information	Inconclusive
Adullam	LBA - EIA	No Information	Inconclusive
Makkedah	LBA - EIA	No Information	Inconclusive
Bethel	1220	Destruction Culture shift	Conquest
Tappuah	LBA - EIA	No Information	Inconclusive
Hepher	LBA - EIA	No Information	Inconclusive
Aphek	LBA - EIA	No destruction No culture shift	Infiltration

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La Sharon	LBA - EIA	No Information	Inconclusive
Madon	LBA - EIA	No Information	Inconclusive
Hazor	1220	Fiery Destruction Cultural Shift	Conquest
Shimron-Meron	LBA - EIA	No Information	Inconclusive
Achshaph	LBA - EIA	No Information	Inconclusive
Taanach	LBA - EIA	No occupation No cultural shift	Infiltration
Megiddo	LBA - EIA	Destruction	Conquest
Kedesh	LBA - EIA	Reduced Occupation	Conquest
Jokneam	Late 13th Cent	Fiery Destruction	Conquest
Dor	LBA - EIA	No Israelite Destruction, No culture shift	Infiltration
Gilgal	LBA - EIA	Logistical base	Conquest
Tirzah	LBA – EIA 10th cent.	Unoccupied Destruction	Infiltration
	Totals		Conquest = 10 Infiltration = 10 Inconclusive = 11

The first conclusion to be reached by reviewing the data in the table centers on the amount of work yet to be done. Of the thirty-one sites, eleven are still inconclusive. Defining the evidence required to conclude between the infiltration

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and the social revolution theories is problematic. Because of very basic issues this author has with the social revolution theory, as discussed on pages 15-17, only the conquest and infiltration theories were used here. According to the information available, the data of ten cities supports the infiltration theory and ten different cities support the conquest theory. Taken as a whole and based on the fact that many of the sites listed in Joshua were not destroyed, the evidence supports the conquest theory.

d) Pottery surveys

Zertal's analysis of pottery surveys provides key information toward thinning the field of theories. Zertal concluded that Israelite pottery entered the land from the area of Trans-Jordan in three phases. The initial phase was limited to superficial penetration into the regions of Jericho and Ai while the second phase exploded into the hill country to the north and to the south. The last two phases were simply uniform expansions of phase two.

More importantly, Zertal proved that early Israelite occupations (as reflected in pottery remains) existed in the south. In other words, Zertal discredited all occupation theories that support a southern entrance into the Land of Canaan.

e) Archaeological and other information – South

The sequence of the list of conquered cities from Joshua chapter 12 implies a logical campaign of conquest in the south. The indications of the text (Joshua 7-

10), combined with the sequential analysis of Joshua chapter 12 paints a clear picture of conquest, but what of archaeology?

Excavations of the cities associated with the Battle of Gibeon have led scholars to conclude that destructions occurred concurrently with the period of the conquest for the cities of Lachish, Eglon, and Debir. Further, those excavations indicated cultural shifts for Gezer, Debir, and Arad. Although these data points are not a majority of the involved sites they do provide limited corroboration. A holistic evaluation of the information indicates a battle for the south associated with the Battle of Gibeon that broke that Canaanite power in the region and supports the conquest theory.

f)   Archaeological and other information – North

The investigation into the sequence of Joshua chapter 12 yielded very supportive information in the south, but the northern campaign associated with Hazor yielded little. Although the northern conquest (as reported in Joshua) centers on the Battle of Merom and the destruction of Hazor, there are no surviving stories to support the sequence of the Joshua narrative. Because Hazor was the strongest of the northern kingdoms we can conclude with a simplistic strategic evaluation that the defeat of Hazor would greatly weaken the northern region. Additionally, the narrative of the Battle of Merom lists all the major northern cities as participants. Even if the cities survived, if their forces were destroyed then their weakened condition could easily lead to their eventual demise.

Excavations in the north have only uncovered two sites that to support the conquest theory: Hazor and Megiddo. Hazor was burned as described in the Joshua account while Megiddo was simply destroyed. The Joshua narrative clearly states that Hazor was the only city in the north destroyed by Joshua indicating the survival of the other cities after their defeat at Merom. That fact is supported by archaeological information from Taanach, Aphek, and Dor, where there was no evidence of Israelite destruction and no cultural shifts in the population. The holistic evaluation of the text and the archaeological information indicates that the Battle of Merom led to the destruction of Hazor and broke Canaanite power in the north. The information supports the conquest theory.

g)   Joshua Vs Judges

Earlier, during the comparison of the two books in chapter 4, we discovered key discrepancies between the two narratives. One of the more interesting of the discrepancies arose from a comparison of city lists between the two books. That comparison yielded five cities (Taanach, Dor, Megiddo, Gezer, and Aphek) listed in Joshua as put to the sword but listed in Judges as not yet captured. Although the cities are discussed in detail in chapter 6 and that information is summarized in the preceding table, some commentary is appropriate.

Among the five cities, only Gezer displayed a cultural shift and only Megiddo displayed any form of destruction. Dor did witness destruction but that destruction is credited to the Phoenicians. This data is important because it shows

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that no one theory is without its weakness and no one theory is absolute. Clearly every city on the Joshua chapter 12 list was not destroyed. The facts surrounding these five cities tend to support the Judges narrative.

h) Chronology

Although the two texts, Joshua and Judges, do have elements in common it appears clear that the two texts are not two versions of the same historic event. Each book is fundamentally unique and is intended to cover its own distinct period of history as it applies to the Israelites. It is, however, equally clear that the historic record of the two texts has become contaminated at some point in its past.

Errors in the text can only be explained one of two ways. Either the erroneous segments of text are fabrications or they relate remembered history that has been falsely related to the period of the conquest. Chronological interpretation of Joshua followed by Judges. The cities of Ai and Jerico are particularly problematic. The exacting descriptions of Joshua's efforts at Ai are compelling but simply do not fit the archaeological record. Additionally, no other site for the events of Ai is acceptable because the terrain at Ai fits the narrative so exactingly. The only logical explanation is that the stories of Ai were at least embellished after the fact to create a conquest history for Israel. The same conclusion can be reached with the narrative accounts of Jerico because Late Bronze Age Jerico was an un-walled city.

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Archaeology has confirmed conventional wisdom with the destruction of the Canaanite cities in the period, generally, of 1220 BC and associated with the end of the Late Bronze Age and the beginning of the Early Iron Age. The book of Joshua fits logically in that period and the book of Judges follows the book of Joshua.

i) Conclusion – My basic theory

In summary, the Israelites did conquer the land of Canaan, but that conquest can best described as a combination of the current theories. The occupation started rather slowly with the initial peaceful infiltration of the hill country in and around Jerico but eventually ignited into open battle. The armed conflict likely started as described in the conquest theory but the process was logically aided by elements of the both the peaceful infiltration and peasant uprising theories.

The Israelites did enter the Land of Canaan before the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age as shown by Zertal's pottery surveys. (Refer to the following map, **Conclusion Map 1**[185]) Those Hebrews lived simple lives as herdsmen in the hill country where the land had no real use to the Canaanites.

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[185] Basic map taken from Pritchard, James, Editor, *The times Atlas of the Bible*, Page 62, Times Books, London, 1994, with data added by the author.
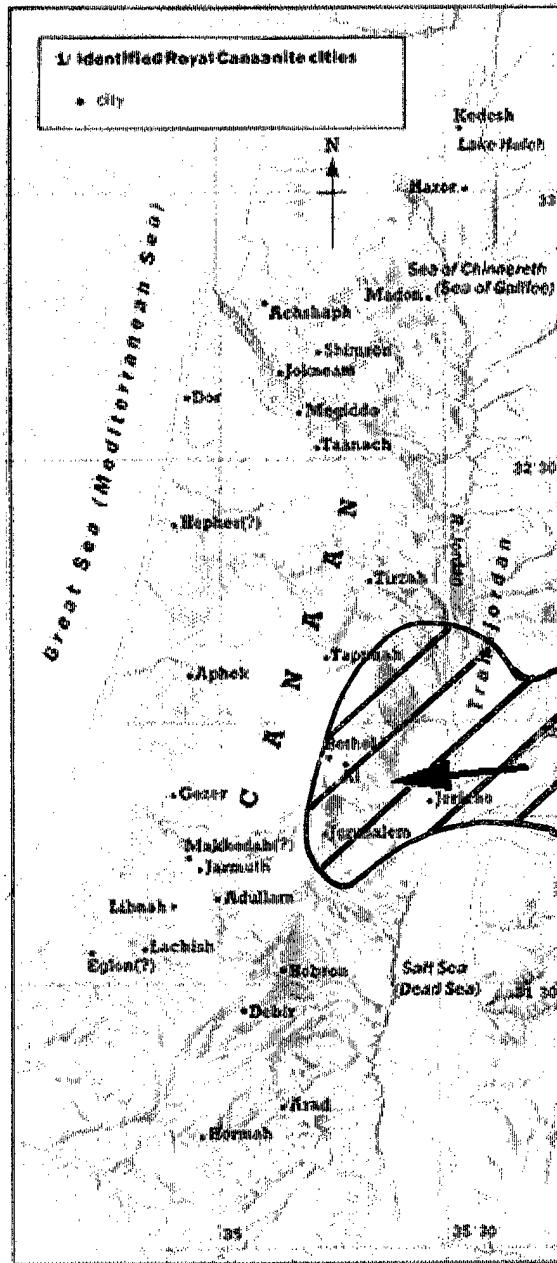
Later, throughout the thirteenth century, Egyptian raids, as indicated at the temples in Karnak, and regional infighting, as indicated in the Amarna Letters,

weakened Canaanite society. It was during that period of weakness that the main wave of Israelites arrived from the Trans-Jordan. The arrival in the Promised Land of a large group of Israelites ignited the existing "Habiru" that had lived in the region as semi-nomadic tribes and on the edges of the Canaanite societies. Additionally, non-Hebrews living on the fringes of Canaanite society greatly aided the incoming Israelites by adding militarily to their numbers, by providing them access to cities, and by providing them with key intelligence information. Treaties further strengthened the Israelites with people like the Gibeonites.

The first of two serious threats faced by the Israelites came from the direction of Jerusalem in what is now known as the Battle of Gibeon. (Refer to the preceding map, **Conclusion Map 2**[186]) Confronted with opposition to their south, the Israelites united to face Jerusalem and her allies. Both the text and the archaeological evidence seem to support the idea that the Israelites turned to meet the enemy army and defeated them. As discussed in the section on sequencing, the Israelite army would have pursued the defeated Canaanite army in order to finish them. After that decisive victory the power of the Canaanite cities in the south was broken and the pastures were open to the Israelites.

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[186] Basic map taken from Pritchard, James, Editor, *The times Atlas of the Bible*, Page 62, Times Books, London, 1994, with data added by the author.
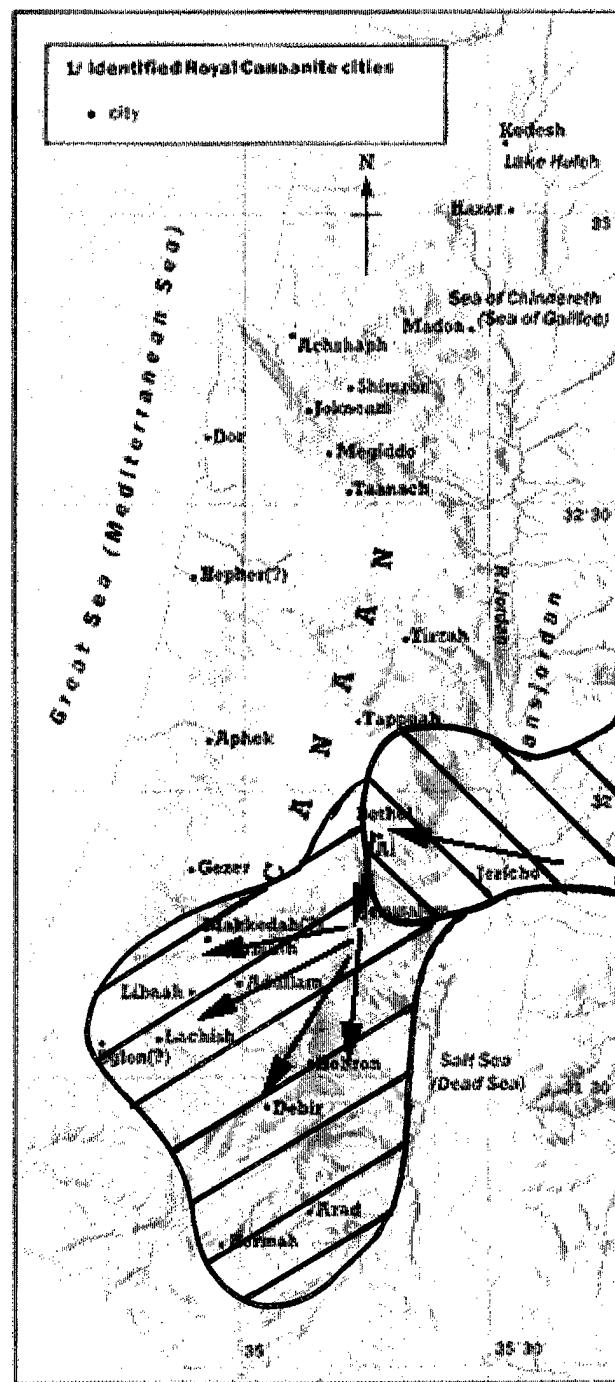
After securing their interests in the south, the Israelites were faced with their second threat: a massing Canaanite army in the north that was led by the King of Hazor. (Refer to the following map, **Conclusion Map 3**[187]) The king of Hazor called the other regional kings to meet him at Merom in order to unite and face the encroaching Israelites. The text relates that the Israelite army surprised the Canaanites at the Waters of Merom and defeated them. Following another pursuit, the Israelites killed the king of Hazor and put the city to the torch. The result of the Battle of Merom (Hazor) in the north was to break Canaanite power in the region allowing the new Israelites the ability to move into the area.

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[187] Basic map taken from Pritchard, James, Editor, *The times Atlas of the Bible*, Page 62, Times Books, London, 1994, with data added by the author.
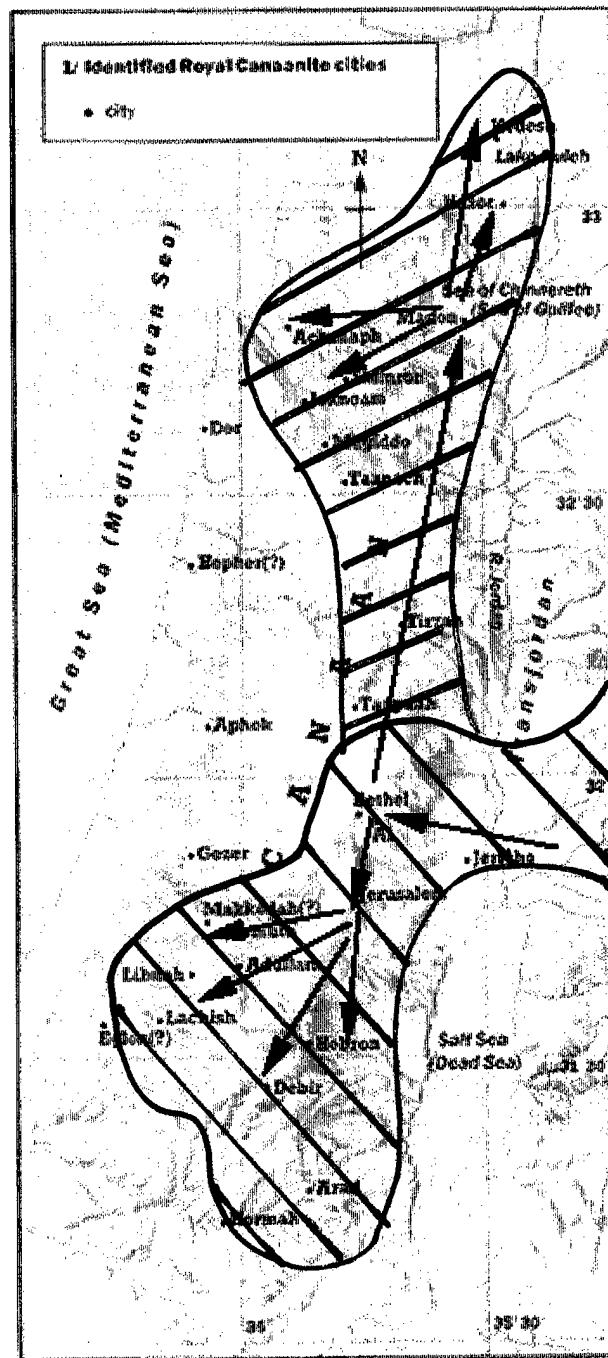
With each of these threats, the Israelites massed their forces and arose victorious over seemingly superior Canaanite forces. Following those two key battles, the power of the Canaanite City kingdoms was effectively broken and the land was open for the taking. The groups of Israelites then dispersed to occupy their lands. (Refer to the following map, **Conclusion Map 4**[188]) For a time the Israelite society remained predominantly semi-nomadic but eventually transitioned to a sedentary city based society. Over time, the Israelites' power and numbers grew which allowed them to capture the strongest of the remaining Canaanite cities. Surviving Canaanites were assimilated into Israelite society and Israelite culture over took Canaanite culture.

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[188] Basic map taken from Pritchard, James, Editor, *The times Atlas of the Bible*, Page 62, Times Books, London, 1994, with data added by the author.

L/ Identified Royal Canaanite cities

- City

Kedesh

Lake Hulah

Hazor

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Sea of Chinnereth
(Sea of Galilee)

Madon

Achshaph

Shimron

Jokneam

Dor

Megiddo

Taanach

32 30

Hepher(?)

Tirzah

Tappuah

Aphek

Bethel

Al

Jericho

Gezer (?)

Jerusalem

Makkedah(?)

Jarmuth

Libnah

Adullam

Lachish

Eglon(?)

Hebron

Salt Sea
(Dead Sea)

31 30

Debir

Arad

Hormah

35

35 30

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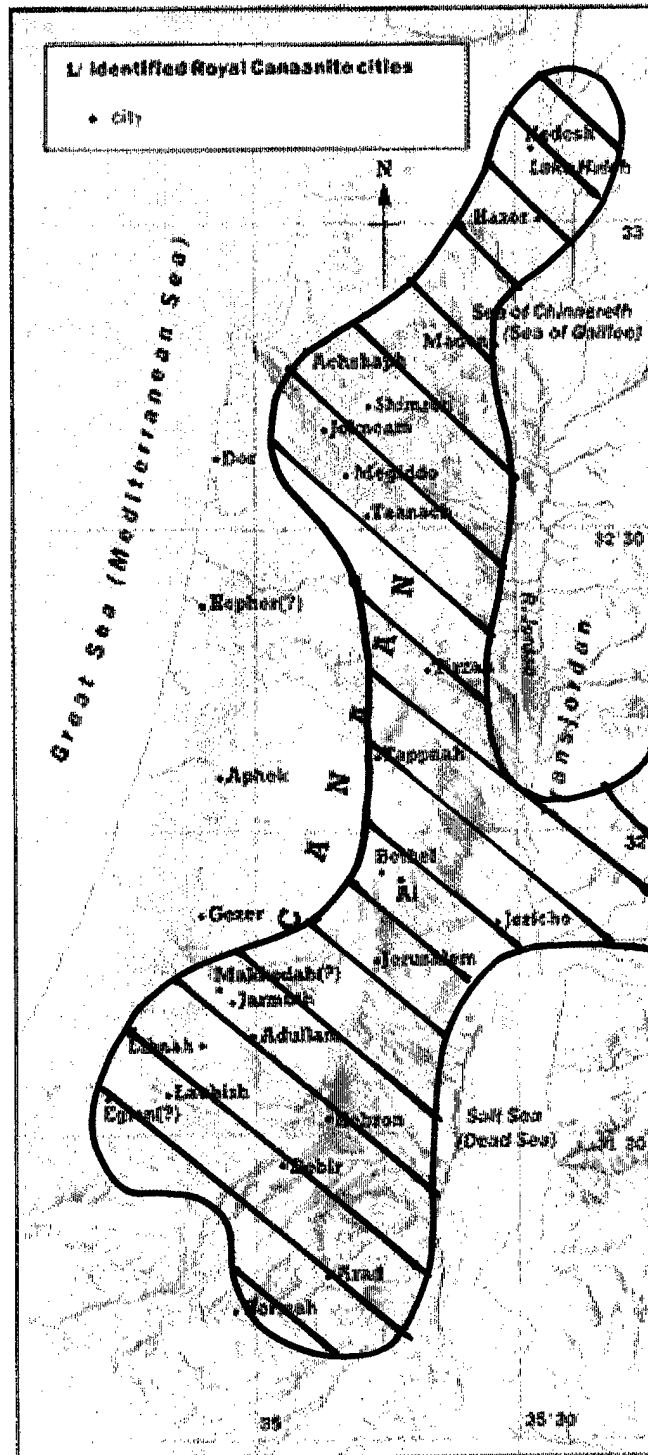
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Vita

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Major Hargus married the former Maridee Ann Lorenz in January 1984. They have two children: Chandra Delyn, born January 1985, and Dreux Lee, born July 1986.

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